

A THOUSAND FACES

GEORGE W. GALVIN





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BY

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AND

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PREFACE

THE JUNGLE," by Upton Sinclair, compelled Roosevelt to investigate the Beef Trust. "*The Turn of the Balance*," by Brand Whitlock, showed the appalling conditions of our jails and penitentiaries, which are stocked with victims of our police departments and of private detective agencies, as many innocent as guilty. Both books are considered masterpieces in description of actually existing conditions. Both created intense interest among those who labor for the uplifting of the millions in our social abyss.

It is hoped that "A THOUSAND FACES," which gives a glimpse of our living hells, designated as asylums for the insane and private sanitariums, will stir every man and woman of red blood to immediate action in behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves.

In offering this book, the thanks of society are due to Mrs. Charles B. Galvin, *née* Antoinette E. Gazzam, whose financial aid enabled the writers to prosecute secret investigations, the cost of which necessitated the expenditure of thousands of dollars. Acknowledgment is also made for the services rendered by George Allan England, in the revision of the MS. and reading of the proofs.

In every State in the Union sane men and women are railroaded into madhouses for life. Not one incident in this book, portraying conditions there, is overdrawn or exaggerated. On the contrary, the half cannot be told, so revolting is the naked truth about these hell-holes of modern "civilization." Actual fact forms the basis of every statement made, of every description written here. And shall you not bestir yourselves? Or are you among those who "don't care what happens, so long as it doesn't happen to you?"

GEORGE W. GALVIN, M.D.

A THOUSAND FACES

CHAPTER I

Two Men

SHE'S a wonder, and she's bound to win!" As if to sign approval to this hearty exclamation and to give positive promise of success, the glowing sun of prairie spring, escaping from an April cloud, flooded with light the large, rather oddly furnished room.

Dr. Phillips had kept so long a silence that the smooth, high brows of the youth beside him were beginning to show a trace of impatience. But this cloudy expression changed into a smile that seemed brighter than April's, when the Doctor, rousing from the enrancement in which he had been studying the model, uttered these words with a ring of conviction and of profound admiration.

"She's a wonder, my boy, and so are you," continued the critic, laying a hand affectionately on the shoulder of the youth, "to have dreamed and put in shape such a—beauty! This ought to spell fame and fortune. By my soul, it seems flawless! Of course you've taken out a patent?"

"Trust me for that!" replied the younger man. "I've seen dear old dad lose his rights in too many valuable inventions through carelessness or overtrustfulness in others not to profit by his bad example. I've

got my patent for this machine safe in this pocket over my heart, just like a love-letter, you know."

Then he laughed charmingly and tossed back his beautiful Greek head with its wavy auburn hair, a gift from his Norse mother. Indeed, he looked like Baldur the Beautiful, incarnated once more, as the April sunshine played over him in the workshop—a sun-god in slight disguise revisiting the earth; except that his hands were not those of a poet, artist, deity. The fingers were short and spatulate, the thumbs longer and thicker than the average for one of his medium build.

Between him and his masterpiece, the model, his companion's gaze alternated, with more in it now than words can readily translate. The Doctor's eyes narrowed as the younger man added, touching his model with a caressing hand: "Even though I know there's millions in it, as it stands, money isn't the sum of life. I know this, young as I am! I want money, *need* money, *money in millions*, to do things with. Ah! you smile; but it's there, right in that machine; and you know it!"

"Nay," said the Doctor, "I was merely smiling at your enthusiasm. You know I do think your invention a marvel; and if you can get proper backing, I believe it will be a winner. I *know* it! I wish I felt as sure of the success of my treatment of your father as I do of your machine!"

A covert smile gleamed through his grave visage, as Fitzgerald bent over the model to blow away some specks of dust.

"Yes, I wish to God I believed in my medicines as fully as I do in this!"

Harold straightened suddenly with a look of surprise.

"Why, Doctor, I thought he was getting better steadily. His appetite is good; his eyes are brighter

than ever, and he has been speaking lately with cheerful confidence of our future. Only yesterday I was thinking that never since mother's death have I known him to show such a—what shall I call it?—resilience of spirit. What is it that alarms or puzzles you now?"

"Frankness, Harold," answered the Doctor, "is one of my few redeeming qualities. It has been on my lips for some time to tell you I believe my treatment is not curing your father; is merely prolonging his life; and that the end may come at any moment."

Harold stared at him with wide eyes. His face had suddenly gone very pale.

"My dear boy," said the Doctor, "you must brace up like a man, and face this thing; a thing which in the course of nature must happen sooner or later. Forgive me, if I have been too abrupt in speaking of this; but I realize my own limitations, and I want you to call in another physician. Your father will not listen to my suggestion of this. He declares I have done wonders for him; but, Harold, I know better. His heart cannot, I fear, be really rejuvenated. I certainly have only tinkered it up, and though I stand high in my profession, I am not a heart-specialist."

A look stole momentarily into Phillips' face from some secret recess of nature darker than his visage; a look not good to see, in countenance of man or of woman. It was like a writhe, seen by a lightning flash, of some strange, pre-Adamite, reptilian monster wallowing in ooze and slime.

But Harold was not looking at the Doctor. Even had he been, so slight and evanescent was the expression, he might have failed to note it; or, catching it, have missed the meaning, the warning of secret evil which it held. When he did again lift eyes of sudden trouble to the physician's face, nothing sinister

showed there. It was kindly, sympathetic, almost benignant; and Harold, grave as was now his new concern, could not but think what an impressively handsome man his new-found friend was.

After a pause, as though of expectation, he answered in a slow, labored voice, like one just coming out of a daze:

"Where shall I find a heart-specialist, at once? Whom do you recommend?"

"There's a Chicago man named Shively, John Harrington Shively, believed to know more about the heart than any man west of Boston; but his fee for coming so far would be pretty steep," answered Phillips, lowering his eyes as though to veil his soul. "If your machine were on the market, his fee would be a mere trifle; but, as it is—I don't of course, know your present resources, yet even persons with resources don't always have a thousand dollars lying idle in their bank. I——"

"A thousand is nothing—thousands—millions—are nothing," cried Harold impetuously, "in comparison with the best of help in my father's case! Luckily I *do* happen to have at this moment considerably more than a thousand of the money mother left—to me especially—I suppose because of a belief I wouldn't spend it quite so fast as dear dad on inventing things. I'll telegraph Dr. Shively immediately. Better still, I'll call him up on the long distance 'phone. Wait here for me, Doctor, and study my machine still more closely. Try to find a flaw in it! Your praise hasn't puffed me up; it has made me, on the contrary, a bit afraid. Perhaps I've been dreaming too sanguinely. I know there's a dream-streak somewhere in my nature. I must have inherited that, at least, from dear old dad, whose dreams have never come true. But he says that

mine must, and will, to make amends."

He looked a moment at the calm countenance of Dr. Phillips; then left the workshop. Phillips, in a sort of automatic way, wheeled up an old morris-chair and, stretching himself at full length in it, began to stare at the model on the small table, as if under a spell. Harold did not come back as soon as expected, and the Doctor's reverie grew deeper.

What was it all about?

CHAPTER II

Concerning Dr. Phillips

WHAT kind of man was Dr. Phillips? Kindly, sympathetic and handsome, impressively handsome he appeared to Harold Fitzgerald.

Phillips, now hypnotized by the model, was well worth studying.

Nine men out of ten would have agreed in considering the physician a very fine specimen in face and figure, as well as mentally; and presumably in morals, as well. Ninety-nine women out of a hundred would have pronounced him unusually handsome; and half of them, if young and inexperienced in men, would have found him more than handsome—fascinating!

But the tenth man-critic would have been likely to say that the brilliant, restless, black eyes of Dr. Phillips were set under the high arch of his brow just an eighth of an inch too near each other; and might have added that the two long locks of raven hair, often nearly brushing his black low-arching eyebrows, with his pointed beard and the purple cord attached to his gold-rimmed eye-glasses, were the things that gave his dark face distinction in the average woman's eyes.

His nose was a thin, flattish aquiline, remarkably like those of many Egyptian mummies, in profile even more than in full-face. The habitual expression of his lips was hidden by a soft moustache through which fine teeth gleamed when he talked.

His figure was undeniably elegant, in its tall grace.

His ordinary dress was far more stylish than that of most members of his hard-working profession; his color-preference being gray, and often a gray of close texture and smooth silvery quality which both caught and rested the eye with a sense of coolness. His carriage suggested swift and wiry strength.

His voice was, perhaps, his most remarkable personal asset. Generally very even, with few modulations and no hint of depth or volume, nevertheless it carried well, and in ordinary conversation seemed to have a singular, lulling effect on most listeners. One of his envious confrères declared that Dr. Phillips' "bamboozling tones and bedside manners were his best stock in trade." This was untrue, for the man had acquired great skill—particularly in nervous disorders and in surgery.

The reputation he had gained in private practice, while still young, had finally led him to establish a private hospital and sanitarium on the outskirts of Minneapolis. This he was conducting, when chance had made him acquainted with the Fitzgeralds. They had inherited through the mother and wife, Hilda, from her uncle, a wealthy Norwegian recluse, enough money for comfortable maintenance, and a life-tenure of a thirty-acre estate with a spacious old house, not far from the spot where Phillips had planted his hospital on the extreme fringe of the city, fronting a rapidly disappearing prairie.

It seemed to Dr. Phillips that he had been called in, when the Fitzgeralds had come from their lifelong home at Dunkirk, Pennsylvania, just in the nick of time to rehabilitate his fortunes. For, successful though this man had been, and still seemed, his life had for some years been beset with ugly fears and webbed with subtle complications.

The foundation of his trouble was not of his own making. An automobile accident in which he had narrowly escaped death had left the vision of one eye seriously impaired by a minute steel splinter, and the other eye had become particularly sympathetic with its injured mate, when under strain.

No visible sign of this appeared. Both of his restless black eyes were brilliant as ever; but Phillips knew well that his career as a surgeon was practically over. He no longer dared trust himself with delicate operations.

Meantime, having always been without morals, he had been led by his loose passions to snarl his domestic affairs. He was now living mentally on edge—groping in a creepy, crepuscular region where two explosions were likely to occur at any minute, and to result in exposure, disgrace, ruin. An excitable, suspicious, morphine-using wife, and an originally wronged, exacting mistress under the same roof; blindness threatening; professional prowess halted; progress for the future stalled; these were the problems for Sydney Phillips to solve, if he could.

Had anyone of penetrant vision, though but partially aware of Dr. Phillips' problem, beheld him now, staring so intently at the model—hypnotized, obsessed by it—the inference would have seemed fair that the solution of everything lay there.

And such inference would have received confirmation when he started up at a footstep breaking his day-dream, and abruptly exclaimed: "By God, he's right. There *are* millions in it!" His eyes focussed gleamingly on the floor. "Millions, by my soul, for a mere boy to play with—if some keener fellows don't euchre him at the start. I must keep a lookout on that!"

"On what?" cried Harold, reëntering. He glanced

inquiringly about. "Who were you speaking to?"

"Ha!" answered Phillips, a little confused. "Did you catch me talking to myself? Queer trick, isn't it? My mind, dear Harold, was on your model still, and I guess I was communing with myself to the effect that I ought to keep watch over you, lest you go into partnership too hastily with men who might cheat you of your reward. You will have to get substantial backing, of course, to put your million-maker on the market; but you must be mighty careful in picking the men you tie up with as partners and promoters."

"I know that," assented Harold. "Mother and I have seen father euchered by capitalists often enough to make us wise. But the bankers in Dunkirk are honest. We've known them all our lives; and when I show them this, I shall have no trouble in getting money to float it."

"I hope you're right," replied the Doctor, "but country bankers, as a rule, lack business imagination. You'll be more likely to find backers in Chicago, New York or Boston. I've some old acquaintances—friends, perhaps, I might call them—in Boston, to whom I can give you letters, if your Dunkirk bankers are shy. I also know some New Yorkers who might be of use to you."

"You're the right kind!" exclaimed Harold. "Not content with patting me on the back, you're eager to help me to my kingdom. I won't forget you—oh, no!—you shall be one of the directors of my company. I thought of you in that capacity the other day, before you fell in love with my model."

"I shall be only too glad to give you any service, however slight. But why were you gone so long? You must have spent a small fortune in telephone tolls!"

"Oh, no; but after I had called up Dr. Shively and

arranged for his coming tomorrow, I went to father's room. I couldn't help telling him how you had been flattering my model. He was greatly pleased by that, but he pooh-poohed my sending for Shively; called it woeful extravagance, a frightful waste of good money which might have been used in working out another 'epoch-making' Fitzgerald invention!"

"Doesn't your father appreciate this one?" asked Phillips.

"Oh, yes! Thoroughly! But he's always been rather inclined to chaff me about my attempted inventions, though in reality I know he's far prouder of them than of his own. Doctor, I can't take any stock in your gloomy forebodings. Father looks brighter to me every day. He said just now he believed he could sleep tonight in bed, instead of up in his chair. He walked across the room several times and said he felt no palpitations; and he offered to bet you double the amount of your next bill,"—here Phillips waved off that suggestion with a graceful hand—"that Dr. Shively would pronounce him well along on the road to complete recovery, thanks to your splendid skill!"

"He's too sanguine, Harold. I've told you the absolute truth. Your father's life hangs on a thread. Should he continue to improve for six months, I might believe in a possible permanent restoration to normality; but I beg of you, for your own sake, not to be too hopeful. The shock will be all the less."

"You're a prophet of evil," said Harold ruefully. "I value your friendship; I respect your sincerity; but I will not believe you can be right, at least not till Dr. Shively has pronounced his verdict. If he gives encouragement, won't you believe as I do?"

"I'll try to, at any rate," answered Phillips, then

very suavely added: "I don't profess infallibility by any means. Also, my dear boy, let me say that I can't help admiring your temperament almost as much as your talent. In your case a peculiarly fortunate temperament has resulted from the blend of Irish and Swede. I wish I might have had the honor of knowing your mother."

Harold made no instant answer, but walked to the window. Tears of mingled sorrow and pleasure had sprung into his blue-gray, sea-gray, eyes. Born of the same strain in an earlier era, this boy might have become poet or musician. This being the superstrenuous Twentieth Century, blind-drunk with materialistic achievements, the impulse of creative energy in him had been directed into channels of invention. Had any one hinted that he would learn to despise—or better say, to rate at their true value—the miracles of materialism and to resent the age in which he lived, he would have stared at such a hint with profound astonishment.

Neither Harold nor the Doctor was now in any mood to prolong the conversation, and after making appointment for the morrow they parted. The April afternoon, playfully brilliant, was waning into a twilight with suggestion of impending shower or drizzle. The soft wind had turned bleak, and Phillips, as he strode home, shivered a little and was glad of his overcoat. He would have always been more comfortable in the thick hot air of a jungle. Harold returned to his father's room for supper and a game of cards, till the invalid should wish to sleep.

CHAPTER III

Mistress and Wife

WHEN Sydney Phillips reached the door of his private office at the sanitarium, his mind was made up as to his course of action in several directions, thus: "I must keep in daily touch with Harold; must bring him to lean on me exclusively. To do this, I must have all my energies undepleted by any irritations. I must break with Barbara. Yes, that is the first step to fortune. Agatha will soon die, and I—I—shall be free! If Barbara is here at the time of Agatha's death, she will, of course, try to force me into marriage. Curious how much I wanted her once for a wife, instead of Agatha, and how little I care for her now! By my soul, I believe I could end in hating her!"

He entered. From the reclining chair by the blazing open fire which flung a vague, shifting light through the rather low-studded room, arose a figure that slowly approached him. At first, from its droop and slow movement, he fancied it was the figure of his principal morphine-patient, his wife. But as he perceived it more clearly, he cried:

"Why, it's Barbara; I thought 'twas Agatha!"

"Yes, Barbara Avery, your sweetheart, not Agatha Phillips, your wife; the partner, before the world, of your triumphs; though I have been your best help-mate, the chief builder of your success, and the savior of your reputation as a surgeon since you became half blind!" Her voice was tense and stern.

"Barbara, dearest," said the physician in a tone of extreme lassitude, as he repelled her advance, "spare me a 'scene' tonight. I admit all you say, all you have done for me, all you are doing. All you have been to me, all you are! But I am tired to the very marrow tonight. I cannot stand reproaches. Our situation has got beyond me. I seem to be on the brink of ruin, exposure, loss of social standing, loss of business, too, soon to come; and all because that morphine-fiend up-stairs has discovered our relation. She knows, Barbara, that since I lost the use of one eye, you have been performing my most delicate operations. Why did you ever let her know that you, who began with me simply as a nurse, had, after you left us, received your diploma as a practitioner of surgery? That was a fatal blunder. Agatha has the whiphand of us now, and she is revelling in her sense of ruinous power, as only a woman and a drug-fiend can."

She faced him mockingly. "If your weary marrow and your jarred nerves, O mighty specimen of man, cannot stand reproaches, you should inflict none! Am I to blame for your wife's knowledge of my shame and my skill? If my memory is worth a pin, it was you, not I, who confided to Agatha, before I returned to your employ and became your 'chief of the staff'—precious title!—that I had realized my girlhood ambition and was a surgeon of skill not many degrees below your own."

"Yes, yes, you are right," said Phillips petulantly, "I remember. I thought that this might serve as a good professional reason for our constant companionship. What a double-distilled damned fool I've been!"

"You seem to be thinking only of yourself. Am I not included in your double-distillation of damnation?"

You speak as if you alone were on the edge of a precipice—the precipice close to which you and I have been playing so long, gathering flowers of passion, which I was once blind enough to believe were blossoms of true love that might some day grow into fruits of calm and permanent happiness.”

“You are quite poetical tonight, my Barbara,” he answered, “and you are more beautiful than usual; but you’re not reasonable. Of course, you are included; but you can get away before the crash comes, save yourself and make a new start in some place where I can join you, after Agatha dies. Perhaps that’s the thing for you to do right now; turn in your resignation in proper form, and request an endorsement of your work and your remarkable acquisitions—they *are* such, for a woman, indeed,” he added with a touch of fairness that seemed like generosity. “Your knowledge, your skill, your daring in using the knife, would be rather remarkable in most *men* of our profession.”

Barbara, smiling but coldly at this tribute, with a look so intense that he paused, disconcerted, made answer:

“Go on, Sydney! I want to face the whole truth. I want to see the very bottom of your mind, even if it is nothing but *black mud with slimy eels wriggling through it*, or lying in wait to snap out at a bait.”

“Barbara,” he answered, with a soft chiding, “I was complimentary; but you are not. I assure you, I was considering your position in the world’s eye, your safety, more than my own. I will sell out this business and seek you again, when Agatha dies.”

“Don’t harp on that, Sydney,” she replied. “You have made me several times wish that poor wreck were dead. But that is past. That guilt, except in impulse or in wish, at least, is not upon my soul. I have

reached the point where I am sorry for Agatha; though, probably because I have caught some of your nature, I am far more sorry for myself."

Sydney stirred uneasily in the chair into which he had sunk down. Barbara stood there with the firelight playing on half her face and leaving the rest in sinister shadow. It was a long, oval, noble, almost Madonna-like face, framed sweepingly over the brow and ears in rather austere fashion with very luxuriant brown hair. Her eyes were violet; so dark as, in some lights, to seem black.

Her neck was of the shapely, stately kind which Solomon once likened in one of his rhapsodies to a tower—a tower of ivory.

Her figure, in correspondence to this lovely neck, was ample, luxuriant, and suggestive of the dignity of maternity. The harmonious fulness of this figure saved her from seeming over-tall.

Sydney, though determined to drive her out of his life, could not help a thrill reminiscent of his early infatuation, as he looked at her now. It was a keen satisfaction, a memory any voluptuary might gloat upon, to have owned, body and soul, so magnificent a creature.

This thought she divined apparently from his eyes, for she resumed speaking with less aggressiveness.

"Yes, but something still remains in reserve which you have never reached; which does not belong to you to keep or throw away; which never will belong to you. You have had only what you cultivated, my professional skill, and the worst, not the best, of my nature; a clinging, passionate companionship which I know you have become cloyed with, and are planning to escape from entirely."

"Oh, no, no, Barbara! Believe me——"

"Keep still! I don't! My intuitions have not been blunted, but sharpened, recently. You were expecting a 'scene' when you entered, to be followed by reconciliation and embraces, like so many 'scenes' in the past. You were mistaken. While waiting for you, I have been reviewing my life as a whole. I saw a girl of fifteen, overgrown, without good home-surroundings, yet not disposed to viciousness, enter this hospital in a shabby dress, with only her bitter need to recommend her. You were just starting this experiment; you needed help. The girl was willing to work hard and long, to serve her probation. She seemed ambitious. You were ambitious, too, and liked that trait."

"That's very true; but why this history? You are too young yet for biography."

"Let me go on," she murmured in deeper tones. He sank back resignedly in the chair from which he had leaned forward with a deprecating gesture, so graceful as almost to seem caressive. "Presently you noticed that the shabby girl had developed into a woman whose cheek warmed at a word of praise from you, and whose dormant natural passion might be kindled into flame by your kisses. Had you been generous, had you possessed a soul, you would have spared this friendless girl you could not wed. You would have sent her away. Yes, I know perfectly what you would say—that some one else would have taken me; that I was ripe and ready to be plucked by any persistent or experienced man."

Phillips tried to shake his head convincingly, but the effort even to himself seemed a failure.

"You became infatuated with me for a while; and I with you," she went on. "I had no standard by which to measure you, and you seemed a superior being. You made me believe at first that our guilty passion would reach an honorable end; that you wished to

have me as your wife—and, I will give you this small credit, I believe you once did wish it so; but, Sydney, I have grown to realize that it could not be. I have learned that there is a wifehood and a husbandry far beyond your conception, a kind of union in which the natural passions become sublimated, with ardor intensified and purified, not coarsened and commonized; in which the embrace is approached reverentially as a holy ceremony, and marriage really is, what one religion has tried by ordinance to make it—a sacrament.”

“*Have you turned Catholic?*” said Sydney. “By my soul, this grows interesting!”

“No, I am not fit to be religious,” replied Barbara, “but I realize that no good, no permanent beauty in living, no spiritual satisfaction, no abiding high happiness, can possibly result from the continuation of a union like ours, or its close in marriage. Now, after lying in your arms, I do not respect myself—I hate, I loathe myself. Before this, as you know, I have striven to break away from you. You are my bad habit—like a drug habit.”

He laughed softly, and as he laughed there came a slight stir in the room which neither noticed, so absorbed were they—she in the message that she had to deliver, the need to speak her mind, and he in his amusement at her self-analysis.

“I am not,” continued Barbara, her breast undulating, but her voice remaining fairly even, “deserting you because of your troubles. You will never fail; you will continue to make money in other ways, or you will marry it. Your type of man always does. But I am going to break my bad habit. I don’t love you. I never did love you. I have found out that love is deeper than passion. I do not love you, and tomorrow I

am going to leave you forever."

"May I venture to inquire," asked Sydney in glacially smooth tones that well concealed a stir of angry jealousy he had never expected to feel, "who has helped you, after all these years of me, to this wonderful, celestial knowledge? Not that it's really any of my business, Barbara, but I'd like to know who is to be my—ahem—successor in office."

"Be careful what you say, Sydney Phillips!" she cried. "I owe but one thing to you—the encouragement you gave my ambition in our profession. My skill in that, or in nursing, will keep me out of the gutter wherever I go. But you, of all men, have the least right to insult me; nor is it wise. You need friends, not enemies; and a woman insulted, as well as morally undermined, may prove a deadly foe. If you dare speak again like that, I shall end by hating you!"

"And you would end well!"

Both started in amazement, and turned; but Phillips did not rise—yet.

How had she come upon them? They instinctively glanced at the heavy draperies about the window. No sign of stir was there. Then they realized that Agatha must have been hidden in the medicine-closet, all the time. She came, now, a little nearer into the light-play of the fire. Her eyes, black as her husband's, were blazing wildly. The pallor of her drawn face was ghostlier than that of any corpse.

"You have been in my closet for morphine!" cried Phillips. "Don't you know you are committing suicide, you fool?"

Barbara shuddered at his brutality. Agatha laughed a mocking laughter ghastlier than her look.

"It saves you from committing murder, you . . . darling!"

He sprang up in fury, like a *fer-de-lance* striking. Barbara pushed him back into the chair. He glared from one to another for a moment, as if fain to kill both at one blow; then recollected himself and resumed his mask of calm.

"Go on!" he exclaimed. "I suppose, tired and bored as I am, I must endure patiently another damnable declamation. Go on, and have done with it!"

"I've—nothing—more——" began Agatha. She tottered, with violently upturned, staring eyes; fell forward; was caught in the strong arms of Barbara and borne out of the room; the mistress actually holding up the wife like a little child in one folded arm, while she opened the door.

"By my soul!" Sydney casually commented, as he noted this feat, "what a strong she-devil you are!" He rose, went to the closet, poured out a tumbler of Madeira from a decanter there; drank it with gusto and returned to the fire to warm himself still more. It was a poor makeshift for the jungle, but it had to do just then.

Barbara carried Agatha up to her chamber, applied restoratives and worked over her, weeping all the while, till the frail wisp of what had once been a beautiful woman regained consciousness and lay in a state of dreamy calm.

"You are going away for good, Barbara," said the wife at last. "I am glad of it for your sake and for my own, too. I have always been jealous of you, although long ago I ceased to care for him; if, indeed, I ever cared in the truest sense. It is very strange. It is a mystery. I shall know its meaning soon, perhaps, for I am going to die. I cannot break my habit, as you have done. I shall die—and it cannot be too soon. Good-bye, Barbara! Go tonight, if you can—go to—

night! I need nothing more now, except"—she stretched her wasted arms—"Kiss me once; kiss me!"

Barbara Avery, sobbing violently now, met Agatha's embrace and kissed her forehead.

"You will be a good woman, Barbara," the prostrate woman whispered, "for you will never see him again—and some day you will more than forgive him; you will utterly forget him. For he isn't real, Barbara; he's only a hideous dream—a hideous, morphine dream."

"Don't talk any more," sobbed Barbara. "Don't excite yourself. He may grow better; may turn kind to you."

The dying woman shook her head faintly.

"It would be—too late!"

Barbara kissed her once more and fled from the room. Once in her own, she packed with feverish haste a suit-case,—every jewel he had given her she had stripped off in the afternoon and thrown on the dresser—seized her old kit of professional tools, and with all she had left of her former savings—barely a hundred dollars—left the hospital without saying good-bye to any one.

To get as far away as possible, she bought a ticket for Boston. Surely, he would never come there; and if he did, what matter? She would be a new woman by that time, and able to meet him, if chance decreed it so, without a thrill, even of discomfort; perhaps even without even so much as a gleam of recognition in her eye. We believe such things of ourselves sometimes, when we burn our ships behind us; when we resolutely sever our lives from lives with which they have been evilly entangled.

Agatha Phillips died that night.

CHAPTER IV

The Great Heart-Specialist

THE heart-specialist recommended by Phillips came from Chicago; examined; asked myriad minute questions as to Kenwyn Fitzgerald's habits of life, the occupations his forebears had pursued, and the ailments they had supposedly died from; made him walk briskly, also backward, lie down, and do many simple feats; tested him before and after these; and jotted memoranda on about a score of small strips of paper torn from a pocket-pad. These hieroglyphs he compared and pored over for a while, as if working out a complicated mathematical problem.

Harold kept a respectful silence during this professional performance, though it seemed an excruciatingly slow process. By the time the specialist had folded up his notes and pocketed them, he had succeeded in impressing father and son as the most thorough person they had ever met.

Then, as the physician looked up from the table, Harold somewhat bashfully and tremulously tried to express appreciation of such care. The great man smiled, with an assumption of frankness that somehow ill-fitted his rather vulpine face.

"I always try to balance the magnitude of my fee by the sum of the minutiae of my investigations and operations," said he. "Otherwise I might not feel I had earned it—even when taking money from the well-to-do. Well, now, you want my verdict, I suppose?"

Both bowed in silence, the patient with a sort of valiant smile perceptibly simulating hope.

"Yours is a tired heart, Mr. Fitzgerald," said the physician, "a heart impaired more by the wear and tear of emotions than by the strain of overwork."

Kenwyn Fitzgerald inclined his head slightly, and a look of rather mournful reminiscence stole over his face.

"But I cannot pronounce your trouble organic," continued the specialist. "Of course, I have not seen you in one of your acute attacks; but you may never have another. Your case has been admirably handled by my professional brother. I am sorry he is not here, in person, that I might compliment him. He's out of town, I take it?"

"No," answered Harold, "but his wife has recently died. He's much affected by the shock, and begs to be excused from any consultation, just yet."

"Ah yes, quite so, quite so," exclaimed Shively, darting a subtle glance at the young man—a glance that for all its directness seemed oblique. "I regret his absence. But no matter. It doesn't signify. I understood you to tell me over the wire, yesterday, that he took rather an unoptimistic view of your father's case. I'm glad to say I believe him mistaken. I can see no reason why, *with care*, your father shouldn't live for years. Of course, I guarantee nothing. In a case of this sort, the unexpected must always be expected—to use an Irish bull—but the prognosis is distinctly favorable."

Harold's face brightened into a smile, as he exclaimed: "Oh, yes, I felt it must be so!" with such a note of rapture that Dr. Shively smiled that vulpine smile again, as he proceeded:

"Of course, your father's present age is always more

or less a critical period. But there have been plenty of cases of men with weak hearts at fifty or fifty-five, who, by simply taking care of themselves, have rounded the Cape of David—the Psalmist—in fine shape and fettle. Some noted cases have even reached extreme old age.”

“You shall be a noted case, father—a celebrated case, dear dad—for you shall become a youth again, watching the triumphal progress of my chariot, my invention on its march to millions!” cried Harold.

The father laughed at this exuberance, and Dr. Shively said with assumed severity:

“Come, come, irreverent youngster, you are rudely interrupting the Oracle.”

“I beg your pardon. I can hardly contain myself. Please go on! It is glorious to hear you speak!”

“The annals of longevity, philosophically pondered, rather induce to a belief that many persons die chiefly because they, not their organs, have become tired of life. Living, apparently, with some persons gets to be a habit they persist in, unless broken of it by sudden shock or accident, until they desiccate, dry up, or die what is termed a natural death.”

“All deaths ought to be natural, oughtn’t they? like all lives?” asked Harold.

“Surely! I knew one case where a man lived to be ninety-eight, in perfect health. He was overhauled once, when ninety-four, while rowing a dory lustily in Boston harbor to an island he owned there, the Outer Brewster, by some fishermen who knew him and thought he ought not at that age to be rowing over rough waves all alone. But he was highly indignant at the notion that he, Nat Austin, High Sheriff of Middlesex County for many years, needed any aid. When finally he slipped into the last sleep one summer afternoon

in his easy chair, neighboring physicians were so curious, they got permission of his kinsfolk to hold an autopsy. They found every organ in perfect condition. There was no apparent reason for his end. It was just like a thoroughly ripe pippin dropping from the Tree of Life—that was all."

"Father," cried Harold beamingly, "*you* shall be more than a celebrated case—you shall be a pippin! You have always been one, anyway, you know, which everybody wanted to pluck!"

Smiling now less wistfully at Harold's bit of raillery, Kenwyn Fitzgerald remarked with all his Irish geniality showing clear:

"You, certainly, Dr. Shively, have the knack of making your professional calls intellectually interesting. I confess I had expected to be tired, or perhaps, you will forgive my saying so, terribly bored by your visit. Instead, I have been greatly entertained."

Dr. Shively glanced at his watch.

"Sorry I can't stay a while and chat with you," said he, "but really, if I'm to catch my train——"

"I can easily take you to the station in our auto," said Harold, "in about seven minutes. Perhaps, now that you've convinced father what he chiefly needs is care, you might like to look into my workshop, and see the model of a little invention which father and myself believe means millions. And so does Dr. Phillips."

The boy's tone, Dr. Shively noticed, was not boastful at all, but one of quiet conviction. He was just on the point of rising from his chair, when the mention of Dr. Phillips evidently brought again to the surface of his mind some former thought; for he picked up one of the medicine bottles, removed the cork, held it a moment under his nostrils in a meditative and

far-minded sort of way, then rose, remarking rather disconnectedly:

"Certainly I shall be charmed to see your model! Dr. Phillips must possess uncommon knowledge of curious, rare drugs and their action in combination. Do I take leave of you here, Mr. Fitzgerald, or shall it be in the workshop?"

Kenwyn stretched his hand.

"I'll say good-bye and thank you here, I think. I'm beginning to be a bit drowsy."

"Fine tribute to my powers as a practitioner of medical magic!" replied Shively, taking his patient's hand. "Rest often, continue your present medicine till Dr. Phillips thinks you may diminish the dosage, and ultimately cut it off. According to my judgment, you are in first-rate hands; in remarkable hands, I might say."

Harold led the way to the workshop and started to explain his invention.

"Pray don't!" intercepted Shively. "Let me study it out myself. I know something about machinery; and it's one of my vanities to discover solutions to problems, if I can, without help. I will ask questions readily enough, when they are necessary for my enlightenment."

He surprised Harold not only by making no queries, but no comments. He simply pored over the model about ten minutes and then abruptly consulted his watch again.

"I think we'd better start now," said he. "I always like to be at a station a few moments before a train starts."

On their way, Dr. Shively's brooding silence had such an edge of actual taciturnity that Harold was too sensitively polite to disturb it by a word; and Harold, too, was tempted into more profundity of re-

flection than his natural wont.

Presently, as they stood by the motor at the station platform, he remembered he had not yet handed the physician his fee. Blushing at the thought that he might have entirely forgotten so to do, he pulled a thousand dollar cheque from his breast-pocket and presented it.

"This is little enough for the great comfort you have given me, Dr. Shively. God bless you all your days!"

Dr. Shively's eyes glinted greedily, despite himself, as he crumpled up the bit of paper and tucked it away.

"My dear young man, I never hesitate in taking fees from those who have. In your case I can feel no shade of hesitance. I know you will write many larger cheques than this; for I see clearly that Dr. Phillips is right also in his prognosis of your model. I agree with him and you. Certainly you ought to make millions out of it. I have only been wondering just exactly what you will do with them. But I believe you will do good. Good-bye!"

Alertly he stepped onto the stairs of the car, waved his hand and vanished within.

Harold stood there thinking, till the engine-bell aroused him. Then he glimpsed Shively's narrow-eyed face at a window, and gave him a parting salute. What a day of unspeakable happiness, thought he.

Ah! Youth! Youth—Genius and Faith!

CHAPTER V

The Laying of the Snare

SO you are going to leave us, to desert us?" Harold said with rueful surprise, almost alarm, for he had already fallen under the spell of Dr. Phillips and grown to regard him as one of his choicest friends—his confidential adviser. "Why must you? Why have you sold your sanitarium, in which you were doing so much good to everybody? I cannot understand it."

"The place has been unbearable ever since my wife died, though I knew for months that she must. But, Harold, there are other reasons. I will confide to you a painful secret." And Dr. Phillips looked a moment at the younger man, as they sat together in the comfortable living-room of the Fitzgerald home.

"Don't speak of it, if it will pain you!" exclaimed Harold.

"No, it will ease me to tell you. Surgery was the ambition of my life. I attained eminence in it, but for the last year I have been holding my reputation only by a strategy that has grated on my self-respect. You may have heard that my eyesight, impaired by an accident, has been restored. But it hasn't. The vision of my right eye is most uncertain. I am threatened with total blindness of both—if I persist."

"Oh! how sorry I am—and just to think what a double burden you have been bearing so calmly, making no sign even to your friends!"

"I have few beyond you. Listen. All this year I

have had to depend on a woman I educated, to perform most of my delicate operations; indeed, almost all of any kind. The day before my wife died, my helper, the woman I had transformed from a mere hospital nurse into an accomplished surgical operator, left me, deserted me. Such is the gratitude one must expect!"

So bitterly sarcastic was the tone, it would have imposed on any one as an outburst of sincerity. Harold looked shocked.

"How base of her! How contemptible! But everybody isn't ungrateful!"

"No. I'll qualify my cynical remark. I will be just, at any rate. There *is* gratitude at times, in this world; but it's a man's virtue. Never expect it of a woman—and beware of the sex, Harold! Don't tangle up your life with women, whatever else you do."

"That's very curious!" answered Harold. "Father once gave me somewhat similar advice. I don't understand it. Why should they be dangerous? Why should a man beware of them?"

"Of course, there have to be exceptions. Your mother, for instance, and mine, no doubt, though I don't remember her distinctly. But there's a reason back of it all. Woman's chastity, which Balzac has called man's greatest invention, has overshadowed and stunted other virtues. Indeed, to such an extent has chastity dominated, that the woman who is even suspected of a lapse from it, in most cases finds herself a social outcast."

"Yes, that's infamously unjust. I've always thought, since I was able to think independently, there should be but one standard of morals for both women and men," answered Harold.

"I wasn't contemplating just now the moral issue—though, of course, you're right on that score—I was

merely, as a man of scientific and philosophic bent, explaining the absence of gratitude in woman's nature by the excluding predominance of a negative, passive virtue, imposed by man upon woman originally as an ideal attribute to be attained and held, over positive or active virtues. But to return to my own affairs. With my life-long ambition clearly doomed to defeat, and the place where I have labored so long become unbearable through associations, I thought it best for me to sell out to a man who has been organizing a rival establishment. He would have driven me out, in the end. Now I have retired with credit unimpaired and enough money for several years of travel in a modest way. You see the common-sense of my course, don't you?"

"I do, but I'm sorrier than I can tell you, Dr. Phillips, and selfishly so, too," answered the younger man, "for I had begun to count upon you as one of my best advisers now, and one of the most active directors of my corporation in the near future. I ask again—why must you leave us? You have done father so much good! I owe you such a debt of gratitude that I can't, I positively can't, lose you suddenly out of my life!

"Stay with us, Dr. Phillips. Rich men have their private physicians, and why shouldn't *we*, since father and I are bound to be more than rich? You can name a salary. You shall have a special den, too," he added ingenuously, "for your own inventions, for making all sorts of experiments in chemistry of which I know you must be fond, if you'll promise not to have more than one explosion a month, on your honor, Dr. Phillips!"

Gazing on that trustful face, hearkening to that charming voice, more caressive at times than any

woman's, realizing—for such a brain as that of Phillips must have realized even while it contemned—the beauty of that character, how could he have continued to harbor any designs of darkness? Phillips replied in even tones and with a smile of subtle cordiality:

“You are grievously tempting me, Harold, to abandon my purpose. If I thought you really did need me, I shouldn't need extra temptation. Your suggestion of a special den is very alluring. By the bye, how did you guess I had a weakness for dabbling in chemistry? I don't remember ever giving a hint of it.”

“Oh! 'twasn't much of a guess. Dr. Shively, after he'd nosed and tasted the medicines you have been giving father, said something about your evidently possessing uncommon knowledge of curious, rare drugs, and their effects in combination. Hence I inferred you must be an inventor, like myself, fond of experimenting in your line; and rare drugs cost heaps of money, I also infer.”

“True; they do, when *very* rare.”

“Since you have been cruelly cut off by fate from pursuing your first path of ambition, why not devote your time to experiments in medical magic?” asked Harold, eagerly. “You might discover or invent something far more beneficial to mankind than my best successes in mechanical forces.”

Phillips regarded him intently with a curiosity that bordered on astonishment.

“You're a generous fellow!” he exclaimed, at length. “You shall have your way. I will stay. Never mind about any salary. If I need to buy any costly drugs, I'll borrow from you. And now, my dear Harold, although I'm so much your elder, it seems to me we have known each other long enough, and have become close enough to drop any formality between us. Why not

hereafter call me Sydney, as I have been calling you Harold for quite a while?"

"Sydney?" cried the boy. "I have long wished you would suggest this. I was a bit shy of showing any forwardness, even in friendship, or I'd have done so without your suggestion!"

He put out his hand. Never was hand extended with more of heart in it. Phillips took it in both his own, feeling he had just achieved a master-stroke. He had been adopted into the family without apparent seeking.

"Now I can carry out my plans for the siege of Dunkirk," said Harold, "you will be here in charge of the household. Father shrinks from going back there even for a short visit; says the place is 'too populous with ghosts of memory.'"

"But are you quite ready?" asked Phillips, solicitously. "Have you perfected the last improvements on your model?"

"I don't intend to bother any more about that, just at present. The patented invention, as it stands, is enough to start the corporation on. Those Dunkirk bankers will see that. Don't shake your head, Sydney. You were mistaken about father's heart. I take that mistake as an omen you'll be equally wrong as to those bankers' heads."

"Possibly you're right."

"Oh! more than possibly! They won't be 'thick,' Sydney, which is choice Pennsylvania Dutch for stupid. Meanwhile you'll take my place with father. How everything seems to work out for the best!"

"Things do seem to adjust themselves; at least sometimes they do, if one is patient," assented the doctor.

"I'll go tell father, now that I've persuaded you to live with us; and you must go this minute and have your personal belongings moved over. You shall have

the west wing of the house. Can you bring over everything in your auto? If not, I'll send the gardener with ours. Let's do everything at once with a grand rush of decision, Sydney!"

"You're a live wire and a lightning-striker, you are!" replied Phillips with a short laugh. "And let me tell you, Harold, you're the only person in this world who ever turned me from a purpose. I hope those Dunkirk capitalists will be half as waxen in your hands. But they have known you from boyhood, and so they must have implicit confidence in you; and surest of all, they ought, if not hopelessly ruttled by their own specialty in business, to see at a glance the immense potential value of your invention. You'll take the model along, of course?"

"Not this one. I have made a duplicate."

"Capital notion!" commented Phillips whose gaze was fastened now on the small, smooth-shining bit of mechanism, as though fascinated—obsessed.

"This first one I shall leave for father and you to admire at times, in my absence."

Harold's laugh rang through the open window like a challenge to the Spring birds.

One on a low, flowering bush near by, took it so; broke into a warble prelusive of Mayday; stopped short in the midst of his tuneful ecstasy—trembling violently—as a sleek, black snake writhed up from the roots of the bush; then uttered a shrill shriek and, wrenching itself away from the ugly apparition, flung itself on the bosom of the air.

The snake, undisconcerted by the escape of one small bird, wriggled up into the blossomy bush. Even though one prey may elude the cunning and the strong, others a-plenty can be found. Darwin phrased it as "The survival of the fittest." The vulgar proverb is much more apt: "*A victim is born every minute!*"

CHAPTER VI

A Father's Prescience

KENWYN FITZGERALD, to Harold's amazement, did not receive the good tidings enthusiastically.

He was reclining in a morris-chair, regarding the declining of the last day of April with a wistful, far-away expression.

At Harold's entrance he started slightly, the far-away look still upon his face.

"Where has your mind been gathering wool, dear dad?"

"I was back in Dunkirk, living over again the early days with your mother, Hildegarde, and wondering how she bore with me and my futile inventive faculty so easily. But my success, after a thousand heart-aches of failure, is coming at last through you, my son. What a pity your mother could not have lived to see it!"

"She did see it, after a fashion, for she told me solemnly she believed I would work this thing out, and prophesied I would do still better things. I mean to try my best to fulfill her prophecy. I'm going to Dunkirk to-morrow. Sydney, who has given up—sold out his business—has just consented, after much urgency, to cast in his lot with us for a while and be your guardian angel, while I'm away."

"Sydney? Who's he?"

"Dr. Phillips—I call him by his first name now."

"Harold, I don't exactly trust Dr. Phillips."

"What?—Why, father!—what can you mean? *You* of all men to distrust a fellow-man! It's unnatural! And especially Dr. Phillips who has done so much for you—'By my soul,' to steal an oath from Sydney, you bewilder me. What will you say next? Give me a reason for your strange distrust!"

The father's brows knit. What reason could he give, after all? He looked his perplexity.

"I don't know just how to express it, Harold," he answered, "but somehow—since the day you told me of his inquiry whether you had a patent, I haven't been quite at ease in my mind. Somehow—somehow, I don't just trust him."

"But, father, that was the most natural inquiry in the world for any one who took any sort of practical friendly interest in me and my work!"

"Perfectly true—and yet—and yet!"

Kenwyn Fitzgerald gazed again on the spring loveliness glowing outside, and his heart misgave him. Why should he put a corrosive distrust into the virginal heart of his son; a distrust that had no foundation in reason; a vague and formless phantasy?

But Harold had demanded a reply, and as Kenwyn turned from contemplating the beauty of the dying spring-day, he noted a straightforward look on his son's face that enforced some sort of answer. With a sudden burst of bitterness that astonished Harold still more, he continued:

"It would have been far better for us all, had I been less trustful of my fellowmen. You ought to know that. Your mother did, to her cost and her sorrow. This world isn't a garden of dreams, my boy—it's a battlefield. I can't bear the shadow of a thought that the fruits of your labor—your genius—should be

stolen from you, and you retain but the husks. This is a commercial, a financial age, my son; a cruel, a pitiless era. It needs a denunciative Dante to depict with appalling accuracy the Inferno of its world-wide tragic-comedy, or a Shakespere or a Shelley to preach in words of heavenly flame a new gospel to the sons and the daughters of man. The churches are not doing it. The universities are just as bad. They look to the rich for their maintenance. The parsons' wives or the priests' housekeepers must be in fashion. The professors' families, the same. Whosoever doubts our civilization is damned; whosoever flouts it is pariah or anathema."

"Why, father, I never saw you in such a mood!"

"These are not new thoughts with me. I was born in a mining town. I saw sights, as a boy, that curdled my blood. You can see them still, even at Dunkirk, if you look close enough. I ran away to enlist in the war, the Civil War. I saw frightful things on the battlefield, but not half so frightful as the industrial battle—the fight for daily bread that rages round us. I came off with honor, thank God, as most Irishmen did. We are all right as a race, in some kinds of strife. We have fought everybody's battles, but our own. In the bloody work of War I was a success, God save the mark! I rose to be a lieutenant; but in what should be the nobler works of Peace I have been a failure."

"Oh! no, no, father! Never that!" protested Harold.

"It is true; but *you* mustn't fail. You've invented a wonderful thing. I saw that before you finished it. 'Twas for that, it would seem, God spared me, when my heart went back on me the last time—that I might enjoy your triumph with you. We've got the patent, all right. *So far*, we're safe. But you must go care-

fully—with extreme caution, my son. Unless you get sufficient capital, you can't realize on this invention, as you ought. You must not, you shall not repeat my experiences. The Fitzgeralds never were business-edged. Few Irishmen are."

"Well, father, now you've shot your shaft," Harold tried to rally his father, "to come back to the main matter,—just what is it you're afraid of in Sydney—Dr. Phillips?"

"I don't know, Harold. I can't put it in words. It's just a feeling—and a fear."

Harold's expression, grown somewhat grave, now brightened.

"If that's all, let's dismiss it. Fears are merely shadows, for minds of substance to subdue."

He uttered this noble philosophy with a simplicity that charmed his father. There was no consciousness about him that he had said a fine and telling thing. The father, infected by his boy's optimism, regained something of his own.

"I guess you're right, after all. Anyway, that's wholesome doctrine. I've been so long an invalid, my mind may have got blurred. Sick folks get queer fancies."

Then, when Harold, naturally heightening in color, told him the tale of Dr. Phillips' troubles, the sympathetic heart of Kenwyn Fitzgerald cried out:

"And he bore himself serenely through all this, and wrought my cure, and that of many others, no doubt? Surely, my fancy must have wronged him. I shall never heed its whisper again!"

That night Sydney Phillips was domiciled at the Fitzgeralds'. The next morning Harold went away to Dunkirk, humming a little Norse ditty he had caught from his mother's lips, when a child.

CHAPTER VII

The Snare Tightens

MAY had begun warm, and inviting all to freshness of life and hope. But Harold was gone on his mission to convert bankers into backers, and his father felt languorous. Nor did Harold's first letter, telling how glad every one in Dunkirk had seemed at sight of him and how many had pleasantly inquired about his father, cheer Kenwyn's spirit.

Part of the time Kenwyn poked about in the workshop, musing over the model and over some other incomplete inventions, or what he called "sketches." Like his boy he was fond of linking invention with artistry. Part of the time he strolled about the grounds, making suggestions to the gardener, also an artist in his humble way.

Through the day he saw little of Dr. Phillips, but of an evening they played checkers or cards for a couple of hours; and if any distrust had lingered after Kenwyn's talk with Harold, it seemed to have worn itself away. Phillips only casually mentioned the invention. He discoursed mostly on his own specialties or on games and flowers, of which last he evinced an intimate, wide knowledge, and for which he exhibited an extreme affection.

"A man so fond of flowers could not have much evil in his nature," was one of Kenwyn's random reflections. He forgot, or did not know, that the Aztecs, who delighted in human sacrifices, whose religion was

a bloodthirsty nightmare, were passionately devoted to floriculture, and reveled almost as much in gorgeous colors and in delicious perfumes as in grisly tortures and in gory rites.

When Harold had been away nearly two weeks, Dr. Phillips received this letter:

DEAR SYDNEY:

I thank you for your daily bulletins. It was like you to be so thoughtful about doing something I did not ask. I am now writing to you, instead of father, because my news is not encouraging, and you must prepare his mind for it.

These bankers—capitalists, I suppose, they class themselves—are not so “thick” as not to see, and to admit frankly, that my invention means a revolution in many processes of industry. But they are timid about investing. They say it will take a long time, as well as much capital, to establish it in the industrial world. They cite instances of the long delays inventors and inventions have encountered. They hint that it may be tangled up in lawsuits for possible infringements, by cunning and unscrupulous patent lawyers.

They harp on the fact that father, a man of versatile talent as they grant, never succeeded. It's almost maddening to hear some of them talk, friendly as they seem. I have had so many interviews with them, and with rich depositors whom they suggested I should see, that I am this moment physically weary—a rare condition for me—as well as heart-sick, soul-sick, over their lack of grasp, of business liveness.

Why, Sydney, would you believe it? one of the liveliest of them said, after he had spent at least two precious hours in figuring out cost of production and all incidental details in such a thorough way I thought he must surely mean business: “Well now, Mr. F., why don't you lay this thing before Tesla, or some great authority, and get his O. K. before you try to start your company?”

Oh, the idiocy, the colossal stupidity of the average man, whether he plays the part of banker or merchant! I suppose that's the reason why we have a few multi-millionaires owning such a vast majority of the property of our country. It's the chuckleheadedness of the masses, particularly the middle-class people who handle a few thousands and think themselves plutocrats, which gives the Captain Kidds of Industry their chance. I'd rather be a day-laborer and think in five-cent pieces, than such men who are daily handling thousands, yet cannot think in them.

The meaning of this long tirade, dear Sydney, is an acknowledgment that you were right and I wrong. I began to feel this fact after my first interview with the president of the biggest concern here. I have fired away for ten precious days and made not a dent on their cerebellums. One of my oldest friends here, a foreman in the slate-mines, without meaning to hurt my feelings, bluntly said: "One trouble is, Harold, they don't take stock in you as a business proposition, because your father's reputation here was that of a half-cracked dreamer."

So you see, Sydney, I'm ready to take your advice about trying Boston or New York. I remember you gave the preference to Boston, because you said you had old friends there. Send me letters of introduction, and I go straight to that goal where men of large affairs will judge my invention on its merits and finance it properly. As they are friends of yours, I don't suppose they will demand the lion's share, and if they do, they can't have it, anyway. What do you say? Wire me your opinion at once. I assume that father is still making progress and not missing me to his detriment at all. I have felt perfectly safe about him, since you have been there.

Affectionately yours,

HAROLD.

P. S. One man, a miner, said to me the day would yet come, when the Government would itself take up every valuable invention and handsomely pension the inventor,

so he could go on inventing. What do you think of *that* for a radical notion? Yet it rather impressed me, coming from the source it did.

The smile of Sydney Phillips at this artless missive, slowly widened. Twice he read it, and paused reflectively over the sentence that began: "It's almost maddening," and the one that closed with the phrase, "a half-cracked dreamer."

Then he went forth and wired:

"Wait letters introduction. Meanwhile comb Dunkirk again. Your father all right. Not fretting."

On his return he locked his door, sought his desk, carefully composed and made copies of two very important letters.

One was addressed to the Hon. Jacob Jackberry, a lawyer who had once been a State Senator and a very successful lobbyist. This Jackberry, a tallish man with a vulturine countenance, who ill dressed an originally rather elegant figure, now tending to obesity, was not in high favor just then with the Judges of the Supreme Court in Equity, partly for some practices that should have caused instant close investigation and resulted in prompt disbarment, but especially perhaps, because in an unguarded moment, when "flushed with insolence and wine," he had bragged—or so it was bruited in the sacrosanct corners of Pemberton Square—that these venerable judges would protect him in his cases, inasmuch as he had lobbied to have their salaries increased.

Now, Judges, even those of the Supreme Court of a sovereign State, who get six thousand a year for upholding old precedents, instead of establishing new

ones to meet new conditions in the evolution of the social organism, are by no means averse to having their wages raised.

Nevertheless, being also very dignified gentlemen with a fine scent for the proprieties, they do not relish any intimations by an inebriated legal underling that their favor is purchasable by lobbying activity.

Jackberry, however (as Phillips was well advised), undeterred by any consciousness of his own unsavoriness of repute, stickled at nothing, from swindling a confiding feminine client to forging a will or producing a false claimant to a great estate.

The other letter was addressed to an almost equally interesting Bostonian. Calvin Alvin Winn, Esquire, was a retired merchant-prince, who had amassed a very cosy fortune by selling shoddy goods on the instalment plan. This man was of portly presence and ruddy face; the kind of pleasantly pompous personage who makes it a point to join the most fashionable church at hand, and who is inevitably chosen to pass the plate.

Winn had early experienced political ambition and had joined one party after another, seeking office and preferment.

His present principal graft lay in what is called "promoting," with a little well-advertised philanthropy on the side. He had a brother not quite so versatile in fraud as himself, but equally inclined thereto, who was not merely of the same profession as Dr. Phillips, but of the same class in college.

Between this trio and Sydney Phillips the cordiality of a perfect understanding had for years existed. He could have confided to them without fear any plan, however heinous.

Yet his letters were so delicately worded that if ever they should happen to be produced in court, or acci-

dentally seen by the subject of them, they would give an impression merely of the writer's keenly sympathetic nature and amiable intent.

Each letter bore the same postscript, which ran ingenuously thus: "Please wire me at once your receipt of this. I wish to be instantly sure that you will be on deck to welcome and take good care of my young friend, Harold, if he arrives within a few days."

These letters the doctor mailed at once and then strolled pensively about the garden, admiring the flowers and meditating darkly.

CHAPTER VIII

Harold Loses His Best Friend

THE musings of Sydney Phillips were suddenly broken by a very respectful touch on his arm. Old Michael, the family helper and faithful follower almost from Kenwyn's childhood, stood beside him with a disturbed and puzzled look.

"Beggin' your pardon, Doctor, for breakin' in on your devotions," said he, "but Master Kenwyn don't same to be falin' so well, or ilse he's in wan of his quare moods. He sint me to the warkshop to fetch him up that teenty machine o' Master Harold's makin', and he's layin' back this moment in his big chair with it on his knees, mutterin' low to himself, and pale as a ghost."

"Don't be scared, Michael, I'll go to him at once," Phillips reassured him, veiling a look of wolfish delight.

He found Kenwyn in a condition of almost complete collapse which rather surprised him, although he had never believed in his patient's ultimate recovery. When he administered a stimulant, however, the patient at once responded.

"I can't account for this, Doctor," said he, after a few minutes. "Three hours ago I was feeling splendidly, and then a singular, slow, nervous depression began. Finally I sent for this model"—he smiled proudly—"to liven me up. Thought it might work like

a charm, as they say, on my spirits."

"Not a bad notion, Mr. Fitzgerald! Mere inanimate objects do sometimes. That's the reason back of our ancestors' fondness for amulets. Have you been suffering any pain?"

"Not an iota. That's the strangeness of it. I've been simply contending with softly successive waves of lassitude. I was growing fainter and fainter, till you gave me your drug just now. All at once I began to feel alive again. But tell me, is this new kind of seizure serious? Had you better wire for Harold to come back?"

"I confess I don't know, Mr. Fitzgerald," the Doctor answered. "Shively's opinion, great authority as he is, did not wholly reassure me. Yet you have seemed, since his visit, to be gaining steadily and rapidly. Perhaps, to be on the safe side, I'd better wire Harold to return, but not so as to alarm him needlessly. Suppose I simply say: 'Father would like to see you before you start for Boston'?"

"So he has failed to find backing in Dunkirk?" asked Kenwyn. "I thought he would. My reputation there could hardly help attaching to him, poor unsuspecting fellow! And so Boston is to be his next objective point? I infer from what you have let slip he must have written you recently."

"I had a letter this morning. It's in my room. Shall I bring it?"

"Not now. I can easily guess its contents. He didn't want to depress me by writing directly of his non-success in our old home. Of course not. He was always considerate of others' feelings, just like his mother."

Kenwyn Fitzgerald sighed. To divert his mind, Phillips picked up the model.

"This ought to brace you up more than my medicines," said he, encouragingly. "Success is here, right here, for your brilliant son. Like yourself, I regarded his Dunkirk trip as a waste of time, except for experience in talking this up. I originally urged New York or Boston as his best fields; and as for Boston I can supply him with introductions there to several men of larger mental mold and monetary associations than he would be likely to find in small towns."

"I'm glad of that. You're practical—the kind of an adviser my son needs."

"And I think," pursued Phillips, "it's much better he should come back here before he starts for Boston. It will reinforce *you*; and will put *him* in a pleasanter frame of mind; a more winning, conquering, mood for his next battle."

"Did he write as if depressed? That would be unlike him!"

"You have reason to be proud of your son," said the Doctor. "No, he is not depressed; but his letter was a bit depressing. It showed irritation, a feeling one should never have a taint of, when approaching a business conference."

"That's very true. We'll smooth him out, between us, before we send him off to Boston!"

"You know the town?"

"Yes, and I like it, too. Boston is in some respects our grandest city. Our noblest American orator and clearest political seer, Wendell Phillips, was born there. So, too, our most famous author, Poe. Her list of illustrious children is long; and her children by adoption, Julia Ward Howe and John Boyle O'Reilly, were torch-bearers of the race."

"Quite so," assented Phillips, a vague speculation flitting across his mind whether it might not be of some

advantage to him, if he could establish some kinship with the first-named agitator.

"The trouble with Boston now seems to be that she has been for some time a moral loafer on the reputation of her former greatness," said Kenwyn. "Possibly she still produces great men, but she fails to recognize them. So how can the outside world be expected to? Yet I heard, on my last visit, a really great speaker—a man who thinks with his heart as well as his head—rock her historic 'Cradle of Liberty,' Faneuil Hall."

"What was his name?" asked Phillips.

"His name? Doctor George B. Clark. By the way, he was one of your own noble calling. His personality was magnetic, striking! And yet somehow even that was merged and lost sight of in the flood of what he said."

"Did Harold meet him?" Phillips now spoke with more evident interest.

"No, Harold wasn't with me then; and if I mentioned to him later the great impression I received, he probably didn't take much notice. He's too young yet to find much interest in such things, and too wrapped up in his inventions, besides."

Came a moment's silence.

"Well, we've talked enough now," finally said the Doctor. "I'll go send that wire to Harold. Meantime, if you have the slightest recurrence of that faintness, take one of these 'dynamites'—nitroglycerine tablets; but I don't think you'll need them. And have Michael put you to bed and cover you warmly. An hour from now I ought to find you in a calm, natural sleep like a child's, with a very slight perspiration."

"I don't need Michael's aid," answered Kenwyn. "I can put myself to bed, if you wish, though I don't feel

a bit sleepy. My brain is clear and vibrant as a bell, and my will-power has come back. Still, I will do your bidding. You know best. Send the telegram. I'm not dying, except, as they say, dying to see my boy again."

Harold thought it strange the auto did not meet him at the station when he returned, since he had wired the probable time of his arrival. The day was drifting into an opalescent twilight. One star-like planet had emerged through the veil, and was gloriously shining.

Harold had lost all sense of his Dunkirk irritations in the thought how soon he would see his loved father and his faithful, new-found friend once more. He looked about for a conveyance. All in sight had been taken. He was tempted to walk. He could reach home in twenty minutes, he knew, and give them a joyful surprise.

Michael, the old helper, had just about this time gone down to the kitchen to bring up Kenwyn's supper. Kenwyn was propped on pillows, gazing far into the twilight, at the star, that seemed not merely to scintillate, but to palpitate; to throb, a thing of life.

Beside him on the coverlet, within easy reach of his hand, shone the model of cunningly interwoven steel. Curious impulse that had prompted the father to take this to bed, as a child takes a favorite toy! Certainly he had not done so from any fear that it might be spirited away. Possibly he was but whimsically yielding to a desire for its nearness, because it symbolized to his loving father-heart his absent boy, and seemed a veritable part and parcel of him.

Kenwyn, as he watched the star, found himself growing singularly fanciful, and realized that he was becoming strangely tired. He had felt slight spells of faintness during the afternoon, but just when he was

beginning to think he had better take a dose of medicine, they had disappeared.

Perhaps, after all, he was not really over-tired. A bird sang up from the garden, as he watched the throbbing star.

The star now seemed to him more vivid, more alive, than himself. It spoke to him, it imaged the always-welcoming face of his wife, Hildegarde, as the song of the wistful evening bird reminded his "dreaming ear" of her soft Scandinavian voice, improvising a love-lay or humming a folksong.

Then the voice in his dreaming ear melted away, and the poetic sentiment of the twilight lapsed into a mood of serene mental exaltation, coupled with a dim sense of sudden physical detachment. All his past aspirations, troubles, bewilderments, griefs of thwarted endeavor, blurred together in what his mind accepted as the true perspective, after all.

Was it the face in the star flooding the soul of him with mystic illumination?

Almost, for one supreme minute, he seemed to pierce the veil of the opalescent mystery; to comprehend life as a whole, embracing death as a part, not as a finish; not a close, but a prelude of stranger and sweeter harmonies.

The illumination—hallucination?—faded as instantly as it had come. His gaze fell from the star of God's workshop to the shining little mass of steel, from his boy's. He stretched a wavering hand and feebly grasped it. Was it slipping from his fingers; and why was not Harold here? Was it not time he should arrive?

The door opened, but Kenwyn did not now turn his face. His eyes were on the model; his lids were dreamily drooping over them,

The man who entered started slightly at the fixity of Kenwyn's attitude; then advanced swiftly to the side of the bed, and took Kenwyn by the right wrist.

Through the door came the old family retainer with the supper-tray, which he placed on a small table, and then stood respectfully watching the two figures.

The upright one relaxed his grasp on the other's wrist, bent closer, drew back, and stood in silence over the strange sight of a dead man with his left hand clutching a small steel toy that seemed eluding his grasp.

Was the near spectator smiling? The old family helper could not see that face; but a thrill of pre-scient horror pierced him. His gray lips twitched, as if he strove to speak.

The gaze of the tall man by the bed no longer rested on the face of its occupant. Instead, it gleamed on the shining model, gloating in twin triumph over the truth of his professional prophecy and the mechanism that spoke the red word, *millions*, to his mind.

Harold came running through the door.

"Father! Sydney! What does this mean?"

Phillips, wheeling rapidly, caught him in both arms.

"It means you must be brave, dear Harold! It is all over, as I feared and foresaw. But he passed away painlessly—happily. See! His face wears a smile; and he is still clasping the model which spoke to his heart of you, and of your return. You must be brave!"

Harold did not seem to hear the soothing words. He had sprung from the detaining arms and flung himself down by the bed with a choked, inarticulate cry, seizing the unresponsive hand.

Michael, with ashen face, was weeping and moaning low: "Why couldn't it ha' been me instead, good Lord?"

Sydney Phillips fell into his former attitude and expression of countenance—gloating.

The throbbing star still gleamed through the window above. The lonely little bird still sang below.

CHAPTER IX

Donald Brush, Reporter

DURING the first month following his father's death, Harold himself seemed scarcely to be a living thing, but to be going through the motions of life automatically. He did not talk about his loss with Sydney, or with old Michael. He appeared stunned.

Phillips tactfully respected this reticence and even made no reference to the long-neglected model, till at last one day Harold said: "Sydney, I must be doing something."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, at last," answered the physician. "Spend the mornings in your workshop now—not poring over books, as you have been doing."

"No, I must get away from here; get away even from *you*, who have been so kind and sympathetic. I must go out into the world and see things and people. I don't seem yet to find any interest in my invention; but perhaps I'd better take those letters of introduction from you and go to Boston. The change may help me."

"I think it will, and my friends there will show you every attention. You don't have to talk any business with them till you feel disposed. Possibly, after a while, I'll join you there. Just now I'm trying to soften my own great loss by working in the laboratory. There's no balm better than work. But you're not yet ready for that, perhaps?"

"No," answered Harold, "I feel now that I must get away somewhere; perhaps I may go further than Boston—to London, Paris, the East. You, meantime, will look after this place for me; and the rents of these buildings in the city which uncle left us a life interest in—now coming all to me—you can collect for me now and right along till I return. What should I do? Give you a written order to represent me?"

"Quite likely that would be sufficient; but I suppose a regular power of attorney would be the proper form," said Phillips, controlling his elation. "I'll get the document tomorrow when I go into the city. Betweenwhiles, if your bank account is low, let me furnish you money. When I have collected your rents, you can pay me back."

"I don't know what I have on hand," Harold replied, "but I suppose there must be still several hundred."

He went to a desk. "Here's my bankbook. Take it down tomorrow and have it balanced. Then you can keep it and make deposits to my account."

Phillips could hardly master himself. How marvelously things do come of their own accord to one who waits in patience!

Next day Harold signed a power of attorney, somewhat simplified from the ordinary printed form, and so complete in its provisions that if Harold's mind had been of normal clarity, some of the expressions would have given him pause. But, as Phillips had calculated, he did not read it carefully; merely glanced at it, and signed with Michael and the gardener as witnesses.

"Dr. Phillips will now attend to everything for me," said Harold. "I'm going away to Boston, maybe for some months."

He took the train that night, and with him Phillips

was careful to see he carried the patented model.

"You can have Senator Jackberry lock it up in his safe," suggested the Doctor, "if you have any fear it might be stolen from you."

"I have no fear," replied Harold. "There seems to be in my mind, just now, no room for anything but grief. Even friendship, even yours, forgive me, now seems distant and illusive. I still feel stunned."

"You will come bravely and nobly out of this, my friend," replied his Doctor, "and in course of time the memory of your mother and father will be transmuted from sorrow into two-fold inspiration—a vitalizing force. I myself am but beginning to emerge from the Valley of the Shadow, and to see there is always work beckoning for me; and be eased and reconciled to life. Youth is resilient; and a change of scene is often a wondrous medicine."

Harold, with surprise, found himself rousing a little out of his profound lethargy of spirit, when he reached Boston. Though he had, at times, a tinge of the "rush" temperament, characterizing most Americans, he felt in no hurry, after his arrival, to present his letters of introduction.

Instead, he decided to install himself in some pleasant apartment and get acquainted with the town. He found advertisements of rooms on Huntington Avenue, near the Public Library. On seeing Copley Square he liked the location, and proceeded to take lodgings on the Avenue.

Chance determines many things. The first day, in the rather dim hallway, a young man collided with him, heartily apologized, and then asked him for a match. Harold did not smoke but he always carried matches; and seeing that the stranger had a filled pipe

in his mouth, with a friendly smile he struck one and held it to the bowl.

"You're a Westerner, or a Southerner?" said the man, who was no more than thirty but looked older, for his face, though handsome, was deep-lined. "No Easterner, or certainly no Bostonian to the manner born, would do that!"

Harold smiled—the first smile since his father's death.

"I'm a Pennsylvanian, but I've been living out West, for some time."

"That accounts for it!" returned the other. "I lived West, too, when a boy. My name's Brush, Don Brush, newspaper man at your service, when off duty from 'The Star.' This is my day off, and I was figuring on a good respectable snooze over Howell's latest novel, full of parlor Socialism. But I'd rather have a chat with you, if you've nothing better to do. This is my room, next to yours. What's your name?"

"Fitzgerald."

"Got a handle to it?"

"Harold."

"I'll call you that, if you don't mind. Won't you come in?"

He threw open his door, and Harold entered. It was a more attractive lair than most reporters are supposed to inhabit.

"Take that lounge chair and light up!" he invited, cordially.

"I don't smoke."

"Noble boy! But I can smoke enough for both of us, if you don't squizzle at the smell."

"No, indeed. I rather like it."

"All right, here goes!" And Brush fired up. A few minutes later, the two men had gone far on the road

of getting acquainted. At Harold's account of his father's death, the reporter looked sympathetic.

"What brought you to Boston, of all places?" asked Brush, at last. "I should think you would have sought the heart of some great forest, the bosom of Mother Nature, or taken a long sea voyage; enlisted for some South pole picnic or strange adventure of some kind!"

Then Harold began talking of his invention, and the eyes of Brush widened a bit as the new-comer discoursed on his model and the millions it meant.

"Great Edison!" ejaculated Brush. "Do you mean to tell me that you, you a mere boy, have invented and patented such a thing? Where is it? Concealed about your person or locked up in a safe?"

"Here's Uncle Sam's recognition of it," replied Harold, producing the patent deed from his pocket. "Also, if you think I'm exaggerating its value, read these letters of introduction from Sydney Phillips to some big Bostonians, while I go get the model itself from my trunk and let you see her. She can tell her own tale better than I can."

Brush had skimmed the documents before Harold re-entered, and his imagination was already awakened; for Sydney's letters were masterpieces, and Brush knew that the men to whom they were addressed were on the fringe of a large financial group.

Professional instinct bubbled up, a few moments after he had seen the model, which fascinated him at once almost as much as it had Sydney Phillips.

"I say, my dear fellow," he exclaimed, "when your company has been formed—and not a word about it in the meantime to any other outsider!—let me have the glory of giving the story to the public. Let me have a scoop for my paper, and add to my credit, beside getting perhaps fifty bones extra for my humble

self! You can help me spend them too. Small moneys were made to be spent, so's to keep small people happy and toiling. Millions are to be kept, hived, shrined, adored! Well, how about it?"

"All right," answered Harold. "So far as I can control it, you shall have the first news of my company, but it may be some time before it's formed, you know. I'm going to go slow about it, and pick my associates carefully. I'm not quite such a dewy daisy as you seem to believe."

"Forgive my assumption and convince me to the contrary!" laughed Brush, blowing a cloud of vapor.

"I will; but what do you think of these letters of introduction, and what do you know of the men? Sydney, who gave them to me—he's a true friend, I know—didn't vouch for them absolutely. He said they were old acquaintances rather than close friends, but he believed them square and he knew they were in touch with big financiers, if not able to swing things all by themselves. He advised me also to be very careful about whom I tied up with."

"His advice is first-rate," replied Brush. "I've heard of Senator Jackberry. I was covering politics for a while when he was on that lay. I don't know anything against him, except that he had the reputation of being an adroit politician some years ago, and something of a lobbyist, after that. I heard a rumor that he would have had the nomination for District Attorney, if a woman client, who claimed he had overcharged her for getting a divorce, hadn't gone about quietly queering him. This rather roused my sympathies, for I suppose lawyers have to charge even women fat fees at times. Lawyers have to live, you know; and besides, I've known more than one ambitious man queered by a selfish, vindictive or utterly empty woman."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harold, recalling his father's and Sydney's counsel, "that, at least, shall never happen to me!"

"I swear, I hope not!" cried Brush with singular vehemence. "I guess Jackberry's all right, anyway. As to Calvin Alvin Winn—great name, isn't it?—he's quite a philanthropist—a philo with a funny bee; has identified himself with every political party, I believe, and never got a nomination for anything, except to take up collections for foreign missions. He's what they call a 'joiner', but a mighty pleasant fellow to meet; never hands out bad cigars to the boys; always flashes a box of the best and says with a grin: 'Take another!' One of my rules, Harold, is 'Never look a gift-cigar in the mouth!' but that doesn't apply to Cal. Al. Winn. His brand of cigars is no fake."

"He's well fixed, financially?"

"I reckon so. Comfortably, at any rate, and close to money. I'm inclined to O.K. him, even though I've heard he made his first pile selling unsanitary, shoddy clothing on instalments. Maybe he didn't know any better, then. Yes, he'll do. Look out for him, though—look out for 'em all. You know——"

Harold laughed.

"Yes, I know," said he. "But when they get up against *me*——!"

"I see you're wise, all right," answered Brush, nodding approval. "Just one thing, however; make no move without putting me next! Is that agreed?"

Harold nodded; and the bond, so strangely woven between them, drew closer still.

The speedy outcome of the comradery thus established was that Harold, who also craved more space than one room, proposed they should rent a small apartment together for the summer. They discovered

one near-by, at a price which to Harold seemed a song, and which Brush, more economical by necessity, admitted was "like finding it." Harold's friendship for the newspaper-man soon equalled that which he felt for Sydney Phillips, without in any way supplanting that sentiment.

Harold felt surprise from the very first, that his new liking for Brush should cheer him so greatly, should put away his grief on a back shelf in his mind, reconcile him with life and renew his interest in mankind. Yet Brush's occasional outbursts of pessimism did jar him excessively. There must, he reflected, be some substantial cause for such moods; but he would not ask the cause or even seek to divine it.

Brush, however, gave him an opening, before long, by remarking one day that "friendship was a divine ease and love was generally a divine disease."

"Don't catch it, Harold, my brother," added he.

"Little danger, I guess," said Harold. "I never yet have felt a touch of that emotion, though I like to look at beauty."

"Don't look at it too attentively! But, perhaps you're safe in Boston."

"That's rank treason and blasphemy! I've only been here a fortnight yet, but I've already seen some very pretty faces, and one very beautiful woman in particular, with a most singular name—Yetive Soule."

"Damn her!" cried Brush, with a distortion of visage that startled Harold. "How in Hell did you happen to run afoul of *her*? Do you know her?"

"No, it was perfectly simple. I went into a photographic studio on Boylston Street the other day, to buy a picture that had caught my fancy. She was at the counter, having a parcel made up, and giving her name and address. I couldn't help hearing it, and then

seeing it written down by her, when the clerk asked how to spell it. She turned her face on me, not in a bold way, but rather nonchalantly."

"Ay, ay!" Brush snarled gutturally, the writhe of his visage gone, but a livid flush remaining.

"It was an unforgettable face, Don," continued Harold, "a face that seemed to have been carved out of creamy ivory, lit with large dark-hazel eyes and with a loose and careless cloud of curious coppery hair. I never saw the like."

"Capital description!" murmured Brush, forcing a laugh. "You've missed your vocation. You should ha' been a reporter!"

"She was almost repulsive to me, somehow," Harold went on. "I didn't glance at her again, but hurried my purchase and hastened away; and do you know, Don, I thought I heard a voice of extreme sweetness remark on my retreat, 'Rather good-looking fellow, but what cowboy manners!' "

"Cultivate 'em!" said Brush. "You might need 'em some time!"

"From the way you've spoken," Harold hesitated, "I infer you know her personally?"

"I do! Or rather, I did. But never mind! 'No more o' that, Hal, an thou lov'st me,' as wise old Jack Falstaff once remarked to a Prince of men not quite so guileless as you. I must rush away now. I've an engagement elsewhere which I near forgot. Ta! ta! I must be off. May see you at midnight, if you're up."

He seized his hat, and bolted from the room. Harold had never seen him in such a mood, and the disturbance lingered in his mind for a long time after the hasty exit. Harold would have been aghast, had he followed his friend around the corner.

Brush was now leaning over a bar, and with a trem-

bling hand was pouring out a drink of rum, "the pet liquor of gentlemen and pirates," as Mr. Lindsay Swift says. The drink was a tall one. He threw it down his throat. Then he poured another and a taller, which he drank slowly, glaring at the barkeeper truculently; but the latter knew his customer.

"Pretty good stuff?" he ventured.

"*Hellish fine!*" was the critical reply.

Don Brush threw down a quarter, nodded, still scowling, and strode briskly out. He walked a few blocks rapidly; entered another rum-shrine; drank deep once more, and emerged looking more serene.

Carefully he filled and lit his big-bowled pipe and strolled pensively along to his newspaper-office.

In that atmosphere of stale smoke and over-used words he was always welcomed and prized, in spite of his known aberrations.

"Glad to see you, Don! What's up? Thought you were off to-day," said a fellow-reporter, looking up from his typewriter.

"So I am, but I thought I'd come round and just try a little scribbling for the fun of it. I've got an inspiration, a hunch from the Infinite."

"Nail her," exclaimed the other, "and shut up!"

Don sat down at his desk and wrote a little of his article on a piece of dun paper with a blunt pencil.

"The Professional Beauty," was the heading.

He stared at the words a while, then muttered to himself: "No, damn her, I can't lose her! I guess I'd better walk some more to brighten my wits. By-by!"

His fellow-scribbler blinked after him pensively a couple of minutes and whistled softly. His thought was this: "I'm devilish afraid dear old Don is getting a good running start for a fortnight's jag. Too derved bad—and we'll need him so, tomorrow!"

CHAPTER X

The Spiders and the Fly

WHEN Harold entered the waiting-room of Senator Jackberry's handsomely appointed suite of offices, the Senator was just stepping from his own room, labeled "Private," over to the one occupied by his bookkeeper and by some small legal boys who were being hatched into practitioners under his auspices. These boys were always well paid for in advance by their relatives, according to the principle of the olden days of apprenticeship.

Even the son of an old comrade, who had committed the generous error of saving juvenile Jackberry from drowning in Jamaica Pond, had no exception made in his favor to this rigid office rule. It was one of the gems of Jackberry's wisdom that one always values much more what one has to pay well for.

Jackberry had a store of such fine practical adages, garnered since his graduating from Harvard University. He had also a knack of coining neat expressions to extol or extenuate vicious deeds. Keeping a helpless ward, who had ignorantly had him appointed trustee of a small estate, three years in Chancery, or Equity, as Americans call that court of last resort for correcting the manifold errors of law, while the sick ward's little family had suffered all the hardships of poverty, Jackberry felicitously termed "showing grim friendship" to the victims of his malice and his greed.

His vulturine face, nevertheless, lit up with an in-

gratifying smile, as he noted Harold's entry. Turning, he advanced with extended hand, and an accent of warm cordiality.

"Glad to see you, at last, Mr. Fitzgerald! Step right into my private office and I'll join you in a minute."

A little later Harold was remarking: "You gave me a fine surprise by knowing me, but I suppose it must be due to Dr. Phillips' description in his letters?"

"Right!" answered Jackberry. "Sydney Phillips must be a mighty warm friend of yours."

"He is," replied the ingenuous Harold. "We've become almost like brothers."

"You Westerners, anyway, are heartier in your feelings and expressions than we are," said the Senator. "Yes, far more expressive. Not that you'll find us cold, I hope; but our climate, my dear sir, is damnably against us about seven months of the year. You arrived when Boston is about at her best, though September and October are pretty decent daughters of the moon. Ever been here before? You shake your head. Well, then, we'll have all the more to show you. I'm happy to say, I can steal the rest of this afternoon from my clients—lucky clients, if a rapacious lawyer doesn't steal more, ha! ha!"

He laughed merrily, took up his telephone and called out, in a second: "Please have my car—the racer—sent round at once!" Then turning to Harold: "I take it you may have called on me first, so I'm going to steal a march on my friend Calvin Winn and take you sight-seeing all by myself. Or shall I relent and give him a chance to companion us?"

Pleased with the Senator's breeziness, which seemed to have something western about it, Harold replied in like vein.

"Suppose you relent," said he. "Else you'll be making me feel as if I were being monopolized. Besides, I can get quicker acquainted with Boston, and with you both, if I have two guides at once."

The Senator smiled benignly, and made no shadow of a reference to Harold's business. He was too shrewd to broach that subject yet, or show the least eagerness about it. His rôle was to pose as the soul of hospitality and give Harold a good time socially, till Harold should become impatient and press the invention on him. He felt no doubt that Winn would be shrewd enough not to begin business overtures, but fall in completely with his policy. Yet to make sure, for Jackberry was a very thorough rogue who never made a bad break when sober, and very seldom when drunk, he said:

"I relent, but I'll not call for Mr. Winn over the 'phone. I'll have a little joke on him. We'll auto round to his office and I'll run up and bring him down. We'll see whether he'll guess, as I did, who you are."

"All right," agreed Harold. "How are you betting on the result?"

"I wager he won't call the turn immediately, though he very likely has had an even more accurate description of you than I have, for he's a much older and closer friend of Dr. Phillips than I am. In fact, I've only a friendly acquaintance of a few years' reckoning with Phillips; and though I've attended professionally a couple of smallish cases for him, I don't really believe I've had the pleasure of more than a dozen hours, all told, in his society. Yet we seemed to understand and appreciate each other pretty well, the first time we met. You Westerners often grapple a man to yourselves at once."

"That's true," assented Harold, though he was not

yet at all ready, however pleased, to grapple the voluble Jackberry. He had come to grapple with him, instead.

The Senator came down so quickly from Winn's office, escorting that ruddy, well-groomed and prepossessing personage, that no one could possibly have suspected any subtle conversation had occurred between them. Winn, too, acted well his rôle of surprise, and then delighted recognition.

"Mr. Fitzgerald, I'm glad to meet you, immensely glad!" he cried, shaking hands with vehemence. "Senator, this is one on me, and there's no limit, whenever you gentlemen say the word. For just about a minute, I'll own up, I didn't catch on, as the boys say. How did you leave my dear friend, and yours, too, Dr. Phillips? Well, I trust?"

"Very well, indeed," answered Harold, "and here's a letter to you I have delayed presenting, because I wanted to get settled first and not come at you gentlemen like a cannonball."

"This will keep," said Winn, thrusting the letter into a pocket as they entered Jackberry's car. "The Doctor wrote me a great account of you, and I've been looking forward to your coming very eagerly. So has Mrs. Winn. I have no secrets from her. She bade me tell you, at once, that we dine always at six, and that any day, or every day, there's a chair for you at our table. I should insist on bringing you up tonight, but I suppose the Senator has bespoken you."

"No, Brother Winn," put in Jackberry. "I don't dare bring up any guest without giving my good lady warning in plenty of time. I haven't got my wife as well-trained as yours."

"I'm glad Mrs. Winn didn't hear that speech! It would have cost me a new gown, P.D.Q.," replied Winn,

and they all laughed merrily, as men will at the most trivial jest, when the air of June is in their nostrils and they are being carried along swiftly in a high-powered car. Winn's office was in the Tremont Building, and the auto had already reached the top of Beacon Street and was purring down past the dome of gilt beneath which the Senator had served several terms and several corporations.

The afternoon passed swiftly. The drive took in Cambridge and Brookline, as well as the fashionable part of Boston; and as both Harold's guides knew their city and its environs exceedingly well, and vied with each other in furnishing their guest with information and with anecdote, Harold expanded with delight. He felt he had never passed so agreeable an afternoon. When the sun began to decline, they were bowling along Huntington Avenue toward Copley Square, and the Senator asked whether he should drop Harold at his rooms or deliver him over to Winn to be taken home for dinner.

"We're late for that, tonight," said Winn, "but with your leave, Senator, I'll book him for dinner tomorrow and come for him in my car. But before leaving him, there's one bit of universal hospitality we mustn't forget, and as I remarked at the start, it's on me. I suggest you take us over to the Westminster, and we'll have just one glass of champagne. I mean I always limit myself to one. You gentlemen, of course, can have all you please."

"One will do for me," said Harold. "I feel exhilarated already with the air and the amount of interesting information you both have so delightfully given me."

"I think," remarked the Senator, assuming a very grave judicial tone, "that one bumper apiece for you may be enough, but inasmuch as I was once a Senator

of this Sovereign State and helped in shaping its laws, I should deem it but a just tribute to my former greatness, if I were permitted to take two."

They parted, fifteen minutes later, outside the Westminster, Harold declining to be taken back to his quarters, as he preferred to walk after the long, delightful whirl; had been "so up in the air," he wanted to "feel his feet again."

Senator Jacob Jackberry and Calvin Alvin Winn went off together, the Senator having remarked in Harold's hearing that he would drop Winn at the Back Bay Station and then motor home and pacify Mrs. Jackberry. Just before they reached that place, the Senator whispered:

"Cal, what do you make of him?"

"Jake," replied Winn, "in spite of his youth and his air of extreme innocence, damn *me* if I think he'll be easy!"

"You're damned well right!" agreed the Senator. "We'll have to play that fish quite a while and very expertly. Don't let your wife, from whom you have no secrets, even so much as hint at his invention."

"Never fear. I have no secrets with my wife, because I never tell her any. They wouldn't be secrets, if I did!"

CHAPTER XI

Confidences

HAL," said Don, as they were finishing their toilet, after a rather irregular breakfast, "you were out late last night. I'm beginning to be worried about your morals. I haven't heard a word about your great invention for a week. You seem to be doing the social stunt exclusively—and exclusively of me, too, more's the pity, your first mentor, guide, philosopher and friend in Boston. Come, now, give an account of yourself!"

"Well, I haven't spoken of the invention, because nobody seems interested enough in it yet to have asked me a question about it. Yet my new acquaintances appear very much interested in me," replied Harold with a simplicity which negatived the notion of any tinge of vanity.

"That's not unnatural. You're a curiosity, Hal; and Bostonians, like their prototypes, the ancient Athenians, are crazy for the curious."

"Even supposing I *may* be a novelty," laughed Harold, "though I don't see why, still it's rather strange that neither the Senator nor Mr. Winn has made the slightest reference, yet, to the serious business that has brought me here. How do you account for that?" A look of shrewdness passed over his candid face. "Are they afraid of showing too much eagerness, and so are deliberately waiting for me to open up?"

"Why, that might be the reason for their showing

you nothing so far but social attentions. On the other hand, some Bostonians are peculiar in expecting things to be forced upon their notice. They fancy slowness a proof of dignity. If they happen to be millionaires, they expect new batches of millions to be offered for their inspection, rejection or gracious acceptance."

"I'm not going to beg them to form my company," said Harold sturdily. "I can find plenty of other investors. I'm not bound to them by any fetters, for the hospitality they have shown. We show hospitality out West habitually, without any thought back of it."

"True enough! But don't mount a high horse, Hal. They are pretty good fellows, according to my reckoning, and you're accredited to them by your particular friend, Dr. Phillips. Pessimistic as I am on some points, I don't let my pessimism go swivel-firing all round the compass. Men have motives of delicacy sometimes—even lawyers. Possibly from what your friend Sydney wrote them about your recent great loss, they're simply trying to lessen the sense of it by interesting your mind in other matters. The social whirl is not without its uses."

"I guess you're right, Don," cried Harold heartily, always quick to regret doing an injustice. "I'm sorry to have felt any irritation at their not showing interest enough in my invention. I'll bring up the matter to-day with Senator Jackberry."

"You'll find them enthusiastic enough, I'll bet, when you show that model, Hal. She'll set 'em crazy, take my word! I've dreamed about that beauty twice, besides my waking dreams, since I first saw her—and I'm not given to raptures; I've seen too much of life."

Two days later, when Don came home from work, he found Harold deep in a book—one from Don's small but well-assorted library.

“‘Looking Backward,’ eh?” exclaimed the reporter, flinging his hat onto the rack and settling down, pipe in mouth, into a big rocker by the window. “Good stuff, that! Look out, Hal, or it’ll be making a Socialist of you!”

Harold looked up with a smile.

“The way things are going now, in this old world of ours,” he answered, “I reckon I shan’t need much persuading. Fact is, Don, I’m almost there, as it is.”

Don looked at him a minute, appraisingly.

“Right!” said he, puffing a volume of smoke. “Don’t know but I can shake with you, on that, myself. Do you know, pretty nearly all the more intelligent reporters, and many of the editors too, on the biggest papers all over the country, have either got there already, or are arriving? Oh no, they don’t dare let it appear in their work; but they’re solid, just the same. I know, of my own knowledge, that if all the Socialists on the ‘Star’ were to strike, the paper couldn’t issue; and the same is true of scores of others I could mention. So go to it, kid! You’re in good company!”

“But, all that aside,” he added, “how’s the invention coming on? Any progress? You were to have seen Jackberry and Winn, today. Anything doing?”

“Looks that way,” answered Harold, laying down the immortal masterpiece.

“Fine!” congratulated the reporter. “I’m guessing, from the absence of the model, you’ve been up against the millionaires. Did they take a shine to it, and get away with it at once?”

“They’re not millionaires, but they’re all right,” answered Harold. “I’ve convinced them easily enough. They’re going to find the money to start manufacturing on a proper scale.”

“Oh! ho! So soon? Good work, old man! Well, I

don't wonder very much. And what's the thing going to be incorporated for—how much is your company to be capitalized at?"

"Twenty million dollars!"

Don sat upright in the rocker, staring out of the wreathing smoke.

"And what will *you* get out of it?"

"I shall hold the controlling interest. Isn't that a plenty?"

"Do you mean to tell me, Hal, that a young fellow barely past twenty-one can blow out of the blizzardy West with a little trifle he's invented, and get a dozen hard-shelled capitalists to back him, for the only reason that they love to see budding genius patted on the back? For the love of Mike, tell me on what grounds you're going to keep the controlling stock?"

Hal flushed indignantly.

"By right of discovery!" he retorted. "It's my invention, isn't it?"

"I'm not disputing Uncle Sammy's word; and yours, without your patent, Hal, would be quite good enough for me. But still, I'm dazed."

"I could sell it outright, Don, and get enough money to make me comfortable for life. But I want a great deal of money, and so I must manufacture these goods, and do it on a big scale. No creeping, when one can soar! I'm giving these capitalists a chance to make money out of my idea. They, in turn, are giving me the chance to exploit my invention quickly. It's a fair arrangement both ways. But, to safeguard myself, I've got to hold the controlling stock."

"I understand that, all right," Don nodded. "I'm surprised only at two things, my bully-boy; one is that they'd let you; t'other is where in *Hell* you got all your caution. It isn't like an Irishman, born in Yankee-

dom."

"My ancestors were Norse, too. Remember that!"

"Yes, I've heard that the Norse were the Yankees of Europe, but this beats the Dutch. I'll be damned!"

Harold laughed. He enjoyed Don's chaff; it keyed him up to talk. He told of that day's interview, repeating even his own exposition of the model's points, which Don had heard before, and picturing the factory with hundreds of well-paid workmen, on short hours of labor, turning out the machine. Like most Irishmen, Harold had the natural gift of oratory; and with it not only the egotism of his race, but of youth and of supreme success in sight.

With gesticulating hands, at which the setting sun through the window pointed a golden finger, as if more in play than mockery, Harold emphasized his points; and when he paused for breath Don said, casting his eyes toward the ceiling, as if he expected oracular answer thence:

"And when the golden pot is found at the foot of the rainbow?" His glance fell down from the ceiling, quizzical, half paternal. Harold winced a bit, but he replied composedly enough:

"You know, I guess, what I'm going to try to do. Perhaps I'm not an out-and-out Socialist yet, but I'm near enough to it so that I intend to get a few things set right—or try to—once the money's mine!"

Don slowly rose and began to pace the floor.

"In the name of God, Hal, what do you know of life that you should try to solve any of its hellish problems?"

"I don't know—that is, not much"—the boy spoke steadily—"but I've learned that life has a thousand faces. I seem to have known this, in a dim way, for a long, long time. I can't explain it clearly; it's in here."

He touched his breast. His glance had grown remote. A half rapt, half consecrated, look came over him. "And every day the thousand pleading faces are—staring at me harder."

Don felt the old tightening in his throat, as he answered:

"You never were more right, Hal, and I'm familiar with every damned one of the thousand!" He paused; then broke out again with some vehemence: "When I was nine years old, my mother died. My father made a bad mess of it, with drink. An agent for a Children's Home got hold of me; his name was Martin—Reverend Wallace Martin. He found me a home and they shipped me out West. I can remember as if it were yesterday. I can remember the Reverend Martin telling a newspaper man about me. He didn't know I was taking in every word. He said he wanted a home for a refined, dark-haired, brown-eyed lad who'd be a prize for some one that needed something to live for. And the newspaper man wrote it up. I've read that clipping almost to a frazzle—the dominie gave it to me to keep afterwards."

Don drew from his pocket a frayed, folded clipping and handed it to Harold, who read aloud:

"The boy had a Methodist preacher for a grandfather. There is a breadth between the little lad's eyes, and a gentle, subdued air of strength about him that—well, he may make a Dwight Moody or a George Peabody. As he stood timid and curious, all the clothes he owns on his little back, his restless eyes following the kind man who had him in charge—his only friend—he seemed strangely helpless, yet singularly potential!"

"That was *me*, Hal, twenty-five years ago—'singularly potential!' Merciful God, that was *me*——"

The wretchedness, the horror in Don's last sentence made Harold shudder.

Presently Brush ceased his restless pacing and seemingly forgot his companion. He sat down, bowing his head into his hands. After a while he rose and talked as he paced the room again. "And yet—and yet——," he said aloud, musingly, "homeless boys are a better investment than Steel Common at nine, which has gone to thirty-four. A boy, loved and trained, will return six per cent. steadily, and now and then one shakes the world. For, of all the potential, impressive, majestic things on earth, none compares with the pure, penetrating, wise, wondering look in the eyes of a boy of nine."

"Were they—these people—good to you?" Harold put this hesitatingly, not sure of his ground.

Brush looked into space a moment.

"Heavenly good!" he said with a heavy sigh. "I remember one year of love and home, then—chaos—*Hell!*" He shivered.

"It was in Illinois, somewhere. There came an epidemic, and my foster parents died within a few hours of each other. For me this loss of a second mother, and of a father just as kind, was one of those unfortunate complete overturns that hit so many lives. I hadn't been legally adopted as yet—and there was a bit of property left, enough to excite the greed of distant kin. I was hustled out of the way and became a State charge. State institutions are not exactly homes. They ought to be doubly beautiful homes for motherless and fatherless children. But they're not. I had brains enough to understand Institutions at once. I ran away—from a prison."

Don fell still suddenly and stared moodily at his pipe. The silence oppressed Harold.

"What adventures you must have had!"

"I did; but I don't remember them definitely. I just survived, somehow, till at fifteen I seemed to have the wisdom of a tired, old man. There weren't many of life's sordid places I didn't know. I saw, I pondered. Young as I was, I formed the opinion that the fellow who works with his hands has no show in 'My Country 'tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty.'

"So I attended night school," Don continued, after a pause. "One day I found myself a reporter on a metropolitan newspaper. Since then"—Don's tone changed abruptly to one of banter—"since then, my boy, I've played dice with the devil under every sun in Christendom." He struck a match and relit his pipe. "Tomorrow night, Hal, we'll go hear Dr. Clark——".

"Dr. Clark?"—Harold knitted his brows, trying to recall mention of any such person. "Who——?" he began.

Don's eyes had closed. He waved a nonchalant hand, then answered in a slow, monotonous voice, as if in deep musing.

"Dr. George B. Clark, of Boston, at Faneuil Hall, in lecture. He's another Utopian, trying to set a crazy universe right. Dr. Clark, Wendell Phillips, Edward Bellamy, Laurence Gronland—Dreamers—Reformers—Fanatics—Ecstatics—I've summered and wintered with a raft of 'em."

"And you really like them, Don, whatever your pessimism says. I know you do!"

"Oh! yes, they're likable enough personally, in spite of being taboo, while they're alive."

"Is Dr. Clark taboo?"

"TABOO, with capital letters!" replied Don. "Capitalistic letters, my boy! But the Doctor's popular enough with the masses; ought to be, for he's done so

many practical things for them, collectively and individually too, whenever he's got a chance. Aside from that, he's the most talked about, abused and hated Socialist in New England."

"Too bad! Of course, he doesn't deserve it!"

"Oh, bless your soul, yes he does! He's earned it; earned the enmity of every hypocrite and charlatan in the State. He's Chief Surgeon of a big hospital here. He's telling things, and that's the crime of crimes, under Capitalism!"

"Why shouldn't he? Shouldn't they be told, and stopped?"

"Oh, no! that would disturb the equilibrium of the 'established ordure,' as a witty friend of mine calls it. Institutions, particularly institutions in Puritan communities, are sacred things—things holier than churches, by a Hell of a sight!"

"Don, you're blasphemous!"

"All right. I caught it from him, then. Preachers thunder at him from their easy pulpits; capitalists dub him crazy, a crank, an agitator, an anarchist—but the Doc goes right on. He isn't the kind that will stay squelched. Every wire that can be pulled to electrocute him, and get him quietly done up and done for, is being pulled. No doubt, they'll get him yet; and that's exactly what they'll do to you, some fine day, my boy, so chuck the job!"

"What job do you mean?"

"Give up your foolish notions of trying to better things; fall decently in love with a nice girl, marry her, but not all her folks, and let this worst of all possible worlds work out its own salvation—or its most damnable deserved damnation! But there——!" Don fanned himself with a paper. "Why the devil should I heat myself to give advice, on such a warm night?"

Things will adjust themselves without *me*. The hour for the woman in your life hasn't struck, Hal. When it does——!" He puffed mightily at his pipe.

Harold pondered a moment, then answered:

"I haven't seen her yet, or even her suggestion. I've ceased to wonder if I ever shall. Perhaps, Don——" he smiled so seriously that Brush felt a lump in his throat—"perhaps, the thousand suffering faces will forever shut a special one from me. Some men are better all alone. You have no wife; and you don't seem to want one."

"I *had* one—that one with the fancy name!"

"The one I met, Don? Yotive Soule?"

"Yes. I'll tell you all about her sometime—some-time when I can do so easily. Now let's fire the tragic and feminine out the window, and go somewhere for supper—my treat. Then I must report at the office and get instructions. Ought to have gone up before, but I'm dog-tired. My news 'll keep anyway; for it's all in my keeping."

CHAPTER XII

Dr. George Rends the Veil

THE audience drawn to hear Dr. George B. Clark, the night when Don and Harold went to his Faneuil Hall speech, was large and enthusiastic. It embraced many and divers elements. Doubters were there; disbelievers in the rights of man had come; individual capitalists, out of curiosity, and hireling spies of Capitalism to take notice and make critical reports, not only of the effect of the speaker's harangue, but also of the men and women of the working class there present, so their employers might "keep tabs" on them and blacklist them, if expedient.

Old men were there whose looks said that the things of this world were not like to interest or to trouble them much longer. Old women, too, some of whom in faraway youth must have been comely, and whose countenances now, like those of some of the old men, caught something of the light of vanished youth from the radiation of the speaker. Young girls, a few were there—an eager wistfulness on their faces. An ethnologist, glancing over that gathering, would have picked out at once a dozen or more nationalities.

The speaker himself was a blend of Celt and Saxon, strong child of an English mother and Irish father. Somewhat above the medium height, his figure had such fine proportions that even our absurd modern garb could not entirely hide its elegance. His head was possibly a little too large for exact conformity

with his body—"a noble fault," as Lord Lytton has remarked. The temples were both broad and high, like Poe's; the chin was also broad, making the whole face indicate power; spell restless, invincible energy. His hair, once dark enough to be called black, was considerably grizzled, and thus perhaps made more pleasant to the eye. His eyes were large and singularly clear, a true Irish blue.

The contrast made by these Celtic eyes with the dark hair and the healthy pink of his complexion was very attractive. His nose was rather short, sharp-pointed and straight, seeming to suggest pugnacity. His teeth flashed, as he spoke.

Handsome and virile, as he stood there at perfect ease, he seemed the kind of natural physician whose very presence radiates health.

For a moment after the chairman's introduction he stood considering the audience. Then, in even and well-modulated tones, he began:

"Ladies and gentlemen, fellow-citizens, fellow-thinkers! Some of you know me by this time. I am an Agitator, a Fanatic, a Crank, according to the newspapers, and, honor bright, I'm profoundly proud of it. Don't forget to put that down——" he looked genially toward the reporters' table with a smile, as if asking a favor, "young gentlemen of the press! I'm glad to see such a goodly band of reporters here in Faneuil Hall. Some of the sacred spirit of this Rostum of Agitators may get into you, through your copy, and possibly into the papers you represent—all of them either juvenile or senile servitors of Capitalism.

"I intend to call your attention chiefly to one of the many great abuses that have crept into power and that flourish in our community; but before I reach it,

and afterward, I may fire thoughts in all directions in the hope that some of them may hit something—even perhaps hit a reporter.”

“Hit the press, Doc, hit the press!” sounded a voice from the gallery.

“In so far as the press represents our so-called civilization, I pray for power to hit it, as my friendly prompter suggests,” answered Clark. “But the press isn’t quite so bad as it might be; it hasn’t yet suggested that I should be arrested.”

“They can’t muzzle you, Doc. Bad cess to ’em!” shouted an Irish voice.

“Terence, if the audience prefers, I’ll step down from this platform, and you shall step up!”

Murmurs of remonstrance rose from the crowd.

“Sorra a wurrud will I spake more; I’ll kape quiet, aven if I bust!”

“Fellow thinkers, do you realize that we are on the eve of a Revolution? Our institutions have become rank; they smell to Heaven; they are a stench in the nostrils of God.

“And why? Because that liberty for which Patrick Henry lifted up his voice and for which Nathan Hale laid down his life, that liberty which our forefathers achieved, has degenerated into an industrial tyranny, into a domestic despotism, a wage-slavery, more brutal and more brutalizing than that which the narrow-minded and blood-thirsty Briton of yore sought to impose on England’s colonies and on all weaker races. Why, that poor old stupid King, George III, and his advisory malefactor, Lord Bute, in their worst moments were not half so great oppressors of the weak as our Rockefeller, our Morgan, and all that pirate tribe. The trouble is, my friends, we are not civilized.

“Our editors, the men who play with words, our

preachers who try to interpret comfortably the vague dreams of dead men about a future world, while blinking the facts of this one, our professors who gravely pretend to extend the realm of human knowledge by means of the differential calculus, Greek roots and other grateful and comforting data, are fond of harping on the glories of civilization.

"But our civilization, a civilization of gold and blood, is only barbarism after all, barbarism canned and chemicalized with benzoate of soda, a preservative and a disguiser of its rotten fruit.

"Whenever a state pats itself on the back and says: 'I am civilized,' that state is a liar and the truth is not in it. That's why Agitators are a necessity for the salvation of a state; that's why I'm a necessity, a severe necessity, my friends."

"G'land, it's a luxury ye are, Doc, whin ye're spakin'!"

"Terence, again! To the lamp-post with Terence!" cried another voice.

"Can't the lubber stow his gab?" growled a sailor-looking fellow.

"It's more light I'd be givin' on a lamp-post than a dozen of yees! G'wan, Doc! I'm only tryin' to encourage ye!" shouted the Celt.

"Thanks! I need it, when I look around me on the Massachusetts of today. This is the State and the very place where Phillips thundered against black slavery in the South. Upon this very platform where now I stand, he leaped like young Apollo smiting the great Python, with a shaft of light divine, and smote into silence the smooth Attorney-General, James Trecothick Austin, who sought with legal sophistries to temporize and obscure a profound—an eternal issue.

"And yet in this Commonwealth, not long ago, the

minions of Capital tried to ravish from parents, because those parents were striking for a paltry raise of a paltry wage, the right, the liberty, of sending their little children away to be better cared for during the industrial battle.

"Men and women of Massachusetts, have you already forgotten that?—You must *not* forget it!

"There's a slang phrase we have heard—'going the limit.' Capitalism went the limit to lunacy, surely, when it tried that! Even the *New York Anvil*, the ablest special deputy the Devil ever had on earth, a paper edited for many years by that saddest of all moral spectacles, a Socialist fallen, took exception to that high-handed, blind-minded outrage.

"The arrest and jailing of Ettor, the Agitator, and the trampling by a hireling judge on the right of habeas corpus, did not jar the editorial desk of the *New York Anvil*; but the attempted detention of the little children did. For that was a jackal crime of capital, an outrage such as only Revolution can wipe away!

"I'm going to say just a few more words on Lawrence, in the fond hope that a warrant may be issued against me for contempt of court. I've so much contempt for this particular court, I think I ought to be arrested for it. Here is a little item:

*"'Breen is Fined \$500.
Member of Lawrence School Board Pays
Without Protest in Dynamite 'Plant'
Case.'"*

"'In the Superior Court this afternoon, Justice Brown presiding, John J. Breen, of Lawrence, was fined \$500 for "planting" dynamite in Lawrence, Jan. 19, 1912.

“ ‘Breen, who is a member of the Board of Education of Lawrence, was indicted on three counts for conspiracy by the Essex County Grand Jury. He paid the fine without protest. Information submitted to the police by Breen, in January, was to the effect that dynamite was planted in a cobbler’s shop adjoining a printing establishment that Joseph J. Ettor frequented, in a tailor shop at 294 Oak St., Lawrence, and in a sandbank, joining a cemetery near the Arlington Mills in Lawrence. Sticks of dynamite were found at these places.’

“Just think of that, will you?

“John J. Breen is fined only \$500, which he paid without protest, for planting dynamite with a design to injure the cause of the strikers by making it seem they had dynamite on hand to use against their Czars, the mill-owners. Only a fine of \$500, for this member of the Lawrence Board of Education, instead of a long term in jail! And nothing done to the men higher up, who proposed the hellish job to him and found him a ready tool! I should be slandering the name of skunk by applying it to a creature who, like John J. Breen, would so foully conspire against the sacred cause of Labor, the cause of All Mankind, as to plant sticks of dynamite! Fellow-thinkers, it has always been deemed a peculiarly base crime, to be a traitor to one’s country. But isn’t it a far greater, far baser crime, to be a traitor to mankind, a traitor to the Race?”

“You ban right, Doctor!” roared a big Swede, shaking his leonine head.

“Hurroo!” yelled Terence. “The Irish foriver! They can’t down us, so long as ye’re wan of us, Docther!”

An uplift of laughter suddenly fell to silence tense,

expectant. Then Dr. Clark made the first particularly noticeable gesture in his deliverance. He swayed a little backward with his arms at full stretch, and cried in thrilling low tones:

“How long shall Labor be nailed to the cross?”

He was answered not by words, but by a long swelling murmur from the audience like that of an ocean-roller just before it dashes itself to foam.

“The Revolution, thank God! is nearer than some men think. Why so? Because conditions are near their worst. And a cowardly pulpit, a truckling press, a greedy few, are blindly speeding it on. Wendell Phillips, the orator, the statesman, the political seer, said many gloriously true things. One of them was this: ‘The great question of the future is Money against Legislation. You and I shall be in our graves before that battle is ended, and unless our children have more courage and patience than saved this country from slavery, republican institutions will go down before monied corporations.’ The corporations of America mean to govern. Unless some power more radical than ordinary politics is found, govern they inevitably will! The only hope of any effectual grapple with the danger lies in rousing the masses whose interests lie permanently in the opposite direction.

“Meantime, above the earthquake now in birth-pangs, unheeding the object-lessons of history—just as they did in France before that glorious flood arose in ’93—the idle rich continue to entertain, to marry their daughters into nobility or semi-royalty, and to revel in their gorgeous villas, while the children in the mills, the women in the factories and the sweat-shops, ay, even the childing women, and the men, our brother men, in every field of labor, are toiling with sallow faces, tired brains and starving bodies, in order

that the rich, their economic masters and mistresses, may idle on dividends and addle their pates with champagne!"

Harold could hardly help fancying that the speaker's eye was upon him. So personal was the appeal of this natural orator that every person in his audiences was apt to feel this touch of direct appeal.

"But I do not care to denounce the idle rich," continued Clark. "Their lives, as pictured in the press, denounce them sufficiently!"

The beautiful, strong voice rolled out like an evangel. Harold began to feel electrified. Dimly, and as if it came from a place afar, from an abyss of horror, he heard the orator's voice describing things he prayed *could not* be true. He heard it saying solemnly that there were even worse slaves than the wage-earners in Massachusetts; men and women in places fouler than prisons, fettered by iron circumstances, crying out to be freed, and dying hideous deaths whose causes were hushed up. It could not be true—no, no—a thousand times no! The speaker must be lying—or be mad. Yet how calmly, with what noble indignation held in leash, the denouncer of our sham democracy was still proceeding!

"Am I really telling you any new thing when I say there are hundreds of persons imprisoned in this Commonwealth who are just as sane as you are, and have never been insane; hundreds in our State institutions who are not of disordered brain, who can talk as coherently as I can, who ask only to be heard—who are pleading—pleading in vain? What is the sum and essence of their plea?"

"This! 'We are entitled to a trial by jury, but are denied it. Give us a chance to be heard, and we will prove our sanity, and will startle humanity by our

revelations. We will show that the Constitution of these United States is being violated in this, and no doubt, in every commonwealth of the Union. We are deprived of our liberty without due process of law. We are beaten and some of us are murdered by brutal attendants. Foul lusts are gratified on our bodies, our bodies which, according to Holy Writ, were meant to be temples of the Living God. Give us but one, one chance to speak!

“Do you think I am exaggerating?” cried the Doctor, suddenly shaking his fist on high. Harold drew back, as if it were at himself. “Listen closer! One of the attendants at Bridgewater, while drunk, came one night last year to a hotel where a friend of mine was stopping, and in a fit of remorse accused himself of helping to kill a lunatic up there; said it was his first go at the game, but he ‘supposed he’d get used to it in time.’ Am I lying? *You know I’m not!*”

“Even lunatics, proven lunatics, are entitled to life, and the very kindest treatment for their hapless case. Who dare deny me that? And some forms of lunacy are curable, easily curable, under proper conditions. But what about those who are sane, yet herded with the mad and under such daily, hourly, momentarily pressure of the horror, that they may themselves go mad from their surroundings, from their loss of liberty, and possibly from a contagion or infection of insanity?

“Among the really lunatic in our State Institutions are many kinds of persons: philosophers adjudged insane for proclaiming advanced ideas; inventors”—Harold did not need the nudge Don gave him at this point; perhaps failed even to notice it—“who have been declared *dérangé* and are incarcerated in order that the product of their genius may be stolen from them;

alcoholic weaklings; drug-slaves, who have been seized and locked up for life, yet who are, as even a half-fledged physician could prove to you, but temporarily unbalanced, and to whom a few months in a true hospital would restore normal mentality, perhaps nevermore to be risked again by them on rum or morphine.

"There, too, are wives conspired against by their husbands who have not dared to seek separation through the divorce courts; and husbands, victims of their vicious wives, who have sought and found more strenuous 'affinities'—with more money to spend on the extravagant whims of these daughters of the devil. My friends, there is a chivalry that's false, a chivalry that makes-believe all women should be ranked as angels. The ugly truth is, there are plenty of bad wives as well as bad husbands; and I hold no brief for men, but for Man.

"Why, I once knew a wife so depraved—my friend the late Dr. Page showed me proofs in her own handwriting—that she could not conceal her eagerness to get rid of her husband in order that she might marry a youngster. She had grave clothes made for her husband in advance; told Dr. Page that he was likely to die suddenly with Bright's disease, and asked my medical brother whether he couldn't be ready to come out instantly at a telephone call, when her husband was at his last gasp with drink, and give her a medical certificate of the cause of death so as to avoid publicity and scandal. Dr. Page demurred at such premeditated precipitancy; but the woman actually did telephone for him to come, declaring her husband was on the point of alcoholic dissolution, and the Doctor went. He found the man who was to die right then, not drunk, but suspiciously sick, and the solicitous wife reeling about the house, inflamed with drink. In her

closet he saw two demijohns. He sampled each. She had ammunitioned herself with whiskey against a siege of wifely grief.

"In the institutions of this State are some persons of wealth held prisoners for life by guardians, trustees and conservators who profit by their wards' having been declared irresponsible. There, too, are old men and women with failing faculties, not demented, but who simply, because found encumbrances, have been got rid of and entrusted to the tender mercies of asylum attendants, frequently hyenas in human form.

"Insanity certainly is, and has been for a long time, curable. These facts I have been giving you are just a few known by jurists, physicians, clergymen, kinsfolks, friends. Investigation has proven these outrages. The whole institutional scheme is rotten. The salaries paid to its officials do not ensure intellectual competence. The wages paid for attendants are so low that the better class of men and women, as a rule, are not attracted by them, and the roughs and toughs get the jobs. The time of some of the officials is consumed in reading, censoring, or suppressing entirely the letters which the hapless insane and the still more wretched sane write to their friends, or supposed friends, in the hope of getting help from the outer world.

"Nor is this true alone of our asylums. Our institutions of related kinds are equally vile. *Our Concord Reformatory for Boys is a worse Bastille than Charles-town State Prison*, a training school for criminality unexcelled and unparalleled. Investigation has established this, and already a society of earnest women and men is organizing to take up the cause of those in oppressed detention. But we Socialists, my friends, have little use for patch-work reforms. We know that

a system maintaining even for a day such hells, and breeding year by year such ghastly wrongs, must be fundamentally wrong.

"It is argued by some that the world is becoming better, though admittedly very slowly. Yet behold! This new century is wearing the brand of a century better forgotten. Sorrow and suffering, the evil shafts of corruption in every department of the nation, strike hardest the victims of our public institutions. These victims are submerged in the deepest pits of our social abyss.

"Tramp, hobo, bum, harlot, all different types of humanity, live in the open till rounded up by the iron hand of law and statistically branded. Their next step is ever down; and when they reach the last rung of the ladder from which their predecessors have fallen, they cling, and glaring up with faces writhing in despair, they make their final drop into the social pit.

"Look at that class in our asylums. It seems well-nigh impossible to believe that they were once beautiful children who might, under fair conditions, have evolved into men and women of high hopes and aspirations, but who now are become raving maniacs or imbecile degenerates, the progeny of an unequal class struggle for that right, so sonorously guaranteed by the Constitution of these United States—the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I plead for the prisoned sane, and the prisoned insane. I plead for the hobo and the harlot. I plead for the poor criminal and for the criminal rich. I plead for the warped little children—and the babies yet to be born. In the name of the Most High God, I plead, *why shouldn't the Revolution come, and come now?* In the name of Christ, Amen!"

The wonderful, sincere voice had been growing more

low and resonant. It lingeringly thrilled, in its last dozen sentences. It ceased without Harold being exactly conscious that it had ceased, at last, and that its auditors were dispersing not merely without applause, but scarcely with comments to each other except in undertones of awe. Harold only realized that after a while Don and he were out of doors and walking homeward. The everlasting stars were looking down on our little planet in all their mystic and majestic loveliness; but Harold, as he glanced up for a moment, seemed to see in their golden scintillation something cold, cruel, malevolent. Was the whole Universe pitiless? The soul of him cried out fiercely. Swiftly he strode along—only Don knew how swiftly and how feverishly, as he watched the lad meanwhile, with compassion, but in silence.

When at length they reached their sitting-room, Harold let go of himself. He made a couple of turns about the room, face flushed, eyes burning, then stopped, facing Don who was relighting his inevitable pipe.

"I tell you, Don," he choked in excess of feeling, as Don looked up from the lounge-chair, his lucifer still in flame, "things have *got* to be different. I'm going to make 'em different, if I die for it—if I have to bring on—why, *if I have to bring on—the REVOLUTION!*"

The flush on his cheeks faded to a faint ash-of-rose tint; his eyes took on the seer's look of far, consecrated, introspective vision.

"Quite right, my boy," said Don, somewhat shaken, despite his professional cynicism. "Things *have* got to be different, but the revolution will arrive on schedule time without your getting your good-looking self hanged by precipitating her. I knew you had ~~the~~

makings of a Socialist in you. You can whoop her up for Socialism now, as if you'd been fed on Karl Marx ever since your cradle."

"Marx?" queried Harold.

"The profound German Jew who laid the foundations of Socialism as a philosophy of economics. But I'm not going to fill you up with him just at present. It's too late and I'm too tired; I'm going to say good-night."

"It *has* been a good night!" cried Harold, enthusiastically wringing his hand. "I can never be grateful enough to you for taking me to hear Dr. Clark! I hope I shall soon have the honor of meeting him socially."

"I'll bring that about in due season," replied Don from the threshold of his room, glancing back for a second before he closed the door. He undressed rapidly, tossed his clothes onto a chair and slipped into his pajamas; but he didn't at once lie down.

For a while he stood at the open window; stood staring out at Boston under the starlight—dim-drifting to its dreams collectively.

"How young, how adorably young he is!" Don murmured half aloud, and smiled; not the smile of superiority in experience, but of affection with a tinge of pathetic envy.

Then the cynic at thirty-four took his temples between his palms for a few silent moments, and with a sigh turned to his bed.

CHAPTER XIII

The Vampire

SENATOR JACKBERRY having sent word he had been unexpectedly called into court and must, therefore, postpone their business conference for two days, Harold felt the need of something to occupy his mind, or rather, to raise it out of the depression into which it had sunk after its mood of intense exaltation following Dr. Clark's appeal.

The injustice, the diabolical cruelty, the hideous despotism of conditions oppressed him fearfully. His wholesome nature rebelled against the tyranny of this thought, forced upon him by the voice of Dr. Clark crying in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the People; make straight their way!"

It rebelled against the thought of world-suffering—world-despair, as every healthy mind should. Harold longed for relief from the pressure now upon him. He had not been much of a reader, except along lines of invention, mechanics, and physics; and, remembering his "Looking Backward," he turned to Don's little library to escape for a while from this world into a better. Through Don's admiration for Poe, he took up at random one of the volumes of that master. Where he opened, the page began thus:

"Misery is manifold; the wretchedness of earth is multiform. Overreaching the wide horizon like the rainbow, its hues are as various as the hues of that arch; as distinct, too, yet as intimately blended. Over-

reaching the wide horizon as the rainbow? How is it that, from beauty, I have derived a type of unloveliness—from the covenant of peace a simile of sorrow?"

Dismayed by this accidental pounding in of the dominant he craved escape from, he put down the volume and took up another. It chanced to be "*Les Misérables*." Don, he remembered, had spoken of this, with a kind of fierce enthusiasm, as "the noblest work of modern genius." "The Wretched," Harold reflected, as he translated the title to himself, "is not the kind of a title that promises much amelioration of my present gloomy mood, but here goes: I'll tackle it." He took the book, and stretching himself in the lounge-chair began.

Hour chased hour, and still he read; read with a fierce, tingling sympathy for Jean Valjean that now and then made his hands clench on the covers; read till night fell upon him with what seemed a tropic suddenness, after a fiery sunset. In a state of smouldering indignation he sallied forth into the twilight twinkle of the town.

He had gone but a few steps when he encountered Don.

"Hello, Harold!" cried the reporter, "what you been doing and where you going? Damn it, I took you for a ghost!"

"I've just been reading '*Les Misérables*,'" replied Harold. Turning, he walked along with Don, who had not seemed inclined to pause.

The night was perfection. Open cars went clanging past. But these held no invitation for Don and Harold. They much preferred to use their legs.

Harold showed no disposition to talk about the subject of his reading. Moodily staring straight ahead,

he walked along for a few moments in silence. "Is life so unfair, so unjust, so terrible, if beheld truly at close quarters?" was the burden of his thought.

Don, with a side-glance, appeared to divine his meditations.

"Jean Valjean is more than a character; he's a type. Life is unjust to countless numbers," he said tersely. "This appears to be a universe of law—law in a wide, scientific sense, of course—but I can't say that it seems to me in any sense a benevolent universe. I'd like right well to believe so, but I can't; and I'm not going to lie to myself. It's bad enough to lie in type of the masses, 'them asses,' as Jay Gould used to call them, at so much per col., but I've never lied to myself; that's one consolation."

"Don't talk that way!" cried Harold testily. "I'm beginning to feel as if all the props were being knocked from under me. I'm terribly upset. Destruction has to precede construction sometimes, I suppose, but the process is painful and bewildering." Then he added impulsively, wistfully: "I've no one but you, Don, and Sydney, that I seem to feel sure of."

The old lump jumped into Don's throat.

"For God's sake, Harold," he answered savagely, "don't be sure of *me*! I'm the last, the very last, person you can depend on. You'll see; you'll know. I'd give anything in the world to deserve what you said just now, but I can't let you go on believing." His voice faltered, then harshened again. "Don't ever let yourself depend on me in anything vital. I'm a creature of wounds that re-open, of cicatrices, of abysses; you'll know what I mean some day, and it's better for you to be—prepared."

In another tone he added, a moment later as they still walked side by side: "And now I suppose I've

knocked still another prop from under you!"

"I'm sorry," said Harold simply. "I'd rather have gone on believing. Did *she* do it?"

Don did not pretend to misunderstand him.

"I've always wanted to believe so," he answered quietly. "She was responsible, perhaps, for much of it, but I suppose the tendency to evil and the capacity for it must have been all within me, waiting to develop sooner or later. Frankly, I don't know whether she's most to blame. I'm still under her spell, I guess, to some extent." After a moment he broke out again: "You shall judge for yourself. Listen, I feel like telling you.

"She was a Vampire. You know Burne-Jones' picture of that type, and Kipling's poem that was written to it? I'm not stuck on Kipling, as a poet or as a man, but his widely quoted verses on 'The Vampire' type of woman *do* fill the order; and it's a damn curious fact that, when my late wife, Yetive Soule—her real name originally, by the bye, was Lily Kundy—read a copy of Kippy's poem, she instantly bristled with rage against him, as if she recognized it as a verbal picture of her own spiritual and emotional emptiness. I had never known her to show anger before. She took the rhymes to herself as a personal insult; the vacuum resented the voice." Don paused a moment, possibly, as a public speaker does when he feels he has uttered a telling phrase, although Don never seemed a talker seeking to make points.

"All the poets who extol femininity," he presently continued, "all the unsuccessful scribblers who envy Kip his ill-got American gold, and his voice now rapidly dwindling, would have chuckled to hear her and to see her denouncing him as 'a vile beast for saying such things of a lady, just because the lady didn't hap-

pen to care for a man's affection and wanted a good time!" It was rich, I tell you, but the joke was really on me, for I was then so infatuated with her outside beauty and her matrimonial tricks that I actually sympathized with her fury and would have liked to lick the poet for keeps, on the spot, because of his versified blasphemy. My Lord, when I look on those days and behold my believing self, I burn and shiver with shame at my utter folly!

"Damn all illusions! I was hugging one, Hal; for I was trying hard, and fooling myself at times into a belief I was really succeeding, to create a responsive soul in my wife, to make her a soul-mate as well as a body-mate; just as Pygmalion warmed by love his marble statue into a ripe and glowing woman. Lily Kundy—Yetive Soule, I mean—was only a tinted shell. She could look *spirituelle*; she could act it, at times; was fond of taking up one odd cult after another, and posing as a high-priestess in Theosophy, Christian Science, Mental Healing, Bahaism, even Spiritualism pure and simple, by Jupiter! Her beauty attracted followers in all cults, and their worship fed her vanity. She was a sure-enough, simon-pure Vampire!"

Don paused; and Harold, though horrified by Don's malignity, feeling he must say something, nervously asked:

"What do you suppose she's doing now? How long is it since you parted?"

"I don't suppose; I know. At this very hour I'm morally certain she's at her favorite diversion, sucking the life-blood of her particular prey. I haven't laid eyes on her in seven years. God forbid I should ever look on her beauty again! I might succumb as before, and strive once more to hug my illusion."

"Can any woman's—magic—be as powerful as all

that?" queried Harold, in surprise. "I find it mighty hard to believe so, Don; though I admit the casual sight of her thrilled me—but with intense repulsion following attraction, as I told you. I was glad to get away."

"It was the keenness, the purity, of your instinct only, that saved you from sudden enslavement to her spell, had she chosen to exert it. You were playing in great luck to escape."

"Don, you speak so fiercely, I could almost fancy you must be under the influence of—some stimulant," remonstrated Harold.

"I speak under the influence of a memory that needs no stimulants," replied Don, evidently trying to calm his tones. "'Oh, for a knife to murder memory, or drug to drown it fifty fathoms deep below the plummet-line of consciousness!' You doubt the truth? I tell you Yotive Soule is one of those women who lack only money to be a scourge on earth. There have been such women in all times; there are today. The whole world hears of them. They're like a pestilence. Wherever they go, they leave a trail of broken hearts, ruined homes, dishonored names. They move across continents like *prima donnas*, or queens, and men of every race and environment are as putty in their hands. Yotive is that kind. But, having started poor, she has had to be content with a narrow area in which to pick her victims. The world may hear of her yet—to its sorrow!"

"Where did you ever run across her, Don?"

"It was in Chicago I first met her. I was twenty. For all my hard knocks and disillusionments, I still nursed some dreams, and I'd kept myself clean. You know what I mean. Maybe I wasn't so much from any inclination to chastity, but as a mere matter of prideful taste, for I'd seen lots of chaps, good fel-

lows, too, go rotten.

"I used to wonder in those days how and when I'd meet the girl who inhabited my house of dreams. Well, one day, I was ordered by my editor to get a story of the winning pictures in a national exhibit of photographs at Detroit that week. A certain classy studio in Chicago had been winning all the medals and money prizes. There was a bit of delay to my seeing the man I particularly wanted to interview, and I found myself in a little room off the main studio. A girl was there, sitting before some kind of a rack, her head and face covered by a black cloth. She was retouching, and her pencil made clicking noises against the glass."

Don suddenly fell silent for a minute or two. The pair had turned out of the lighted thoroughfare and were passing along shaded streets. Queer small noises, elfin rustlings in the grass of velvet lawns, came stealthily upon, and through, the fragrant darkness. There was a sense, a hint, of drifting away on some special wave of reminiscence.

"I caught my breath," Don suddenly resumed, "when she pushed that black thing off and looked up at me, Hal. Hers was a face one isn't likely ever to forget. Ask yourself if that's not so!"

Harold nodded, but spoke not.

"Think of the creamiest white, the most sublucent ivory, you ever saw; the complexion of a shark's tooth, one traveler called it. That was the color of her face and neck. That neck used to rouse the most extraordinary passions in me. So white, such an extraordinary, bewildering white, that I often wanted to squeeze it in both hands, tight, tighter! Ugh! it makes me shiver now. And yet, mind you, it wasn't a cold white; it was a warm, faintly flushed white, as I

said. And her hair was red—such a wonderful red—not really red, you know, nor yellow; but in certain lights a red like some oranges, and so heavy it seemed to pull her head backward. The effect was regal! But it was her mouth I dwelt and doted upon, most; her mouth and her marvellous eyes. I remember she told me once that one of her girl school-mates nicknamed her ‘Eyes’; used to cry out: ‘Oh! here comes “Eyes,”’ and to rave over her beauty, like a man, or a damn fool boy—such as I was.”

He paused again, brooding. In the light from a lamp-post Harold saw his face. The haggard lines had deepened.

“Her mouth was like a poinsettia blossom in its intense, vivid scarlet. That red, red mouth in that white, white face—oh! she did the most fascinating things with her mouth, Hal. One was perpetually watching it—that is, when one escaped her eyes for a moment. At first, they startled you—those marvellous eyes. They were a reddish hazel, with heavy, black lashes and slender brows. Alluring, seductive, sense-enkindling eyes! After a while you found out that they were the eyes of a Vampire; eyes that sucked you dry; that made you tell, reluctantly at first, the things you would rather not; and presently made you empty your heart of all secrets; made you want with eagerness to lay bare your soul to their proving quest.”

Don seemed to find it impossible to continue, and Harold half shrank from hearing more; yet longed to know.

Presently, with noticeable effort, Don resumed:

“It may sound inconsistent, when I say that, for all her ivory whiteness, she as a whole somehow suggested flame. Yet she did. Maybe it was her lips and hair. But the flame was all on the outside. She

was ice, within. I never once in the three years we lived together like man and wife——”

Harold uttered an exclamation of incredulity. Don glanced at him.

“Oh, yes, I legally married her,” said he, “but never once did I see her display one spark of genuine, warm human feeling—not once. Endearments, beguilements, caresses, oh, certainly; she had those, of course. They are a Vampire’s plentiful stock-in-trade; but back of every passioned caress was hidden some selfish design. She was always intent on receiving gratification of passion, or of vanity, never of giving. The mystical communion through the flesh held no spiritual meaning for her. Her soul never met mine there, for she hadn’t any. Hal, she was the essence, the quintessence, of selfishness. I know now she married me to escape what she deemed slavery. I was the first rock of refuge to which, like tossed-about kelp, she could cling. She was eighteen at the time and had toiled in that studio two years. But she was clever—clever as Hell!”

Don wiped a dampness, not of the night, from his brow, and Harold shuddered.

“She knew her good looks made her stock-in-trade,” Don presently continued, “and she was as cold and calculating as an adventuress of forty. She didn’t propose to dissipate those good looks by intrigues and irregularities, not she! Now what I’m going to say will sound terrible to you, Hal. I’m knocking still another prop from under you, but the plain truth is that she had never been truly or spiritually chaste; she was merely virtuous, virtuous from calculation and not from any innate purity. I found out her ambition at an early stage of the game. She had her fervors and her life-dream, too; her dream was to be a pro-

fessional beauty, the kind the whole world hears about. Well, she planned a regular campaign, and there were to be no devastating love-affairs in it—not at that point in the program, at least. Her cleverness was pretty human—diabolical—if you follow it from its inception.

“She was a California girl—did I tell you?—and of mixed nationality;—French, Portuguese, I’m not sure which; with a strain of Irish blood in her to account for that hair and skin. I think her father was a trader who had drifted into Lower California. Anyway, through vicissitudes of one sort and another, Lily Kundy found herself alone in Chicago at sixteen with the necessity of self-support staring her in the face. Please, Hal, don’t think me unchivalrous! I’m perfectly aware that a young, beautiful and penniless girl alone in a mighty city is up against a proposition that requires genius of a high order to solve. But I told you she was infernally clever.

“She had one propensity something like a genuine passion, which permeated, as it were, her emotional emptiness; and that was pictures. Portraits always, and preferably of women, or of delicately shaped youths. With her ambition clutching her even then, she sought the ateliers and the photograph studios, and was engaged at once. Part of her work was retouching, but posing for show-photographs was another, and this was what she aimed at. She wasn’t the voluptuous type as to figure. She was very slim and fairly tall. Her eyes were almost on a level with mine, and I’m over five feet eight. But her slimness was grace itself, and she was proportioned like a Greek statue; like Powers’ Greek Slave. The studio was full of pictures of her—shoulder studies, three-quarter views of her wonderful back, with her small, firm breasts just

glimpsing. One, of the head and profile, and a shoulder portrait, had won two of the medals for her studio at the Detroit exhibit.

"She hoped through these pictures to obtain an increasing renown, and then she could pick and choose her future. This had gone along for two years when I appeared upon the scene, and I fitted into her scheme of things just then. You see, renown was a little slower in coming than she had reckoned, and her vanity was insatiable, colossal, unimaginable.

"Well, even though I was only twenty, I was no cub-reporter. I was doing exceedingly well as a newspaper correspondent for outside papers, besides my salary on my own. My future did look brilliant. Yetive—that's what she taught me to call her, when she invented that fancy name—had begun to feel the need of a setting for her beauty; clothes, jewels and all that sort of thing; and she was not ready at that time to barter her beauty for these goods—she had other plans up her sleeve."

Don lapsed into another silence, a prolonged one, and for half a dozen blocks walked moodily, enshrouded in his thoughts. Harold had begun to feel a curious resentment against him. It seemed unchivalrous, almost indecent somehow, to strip this Lily Kundy—this girl who had been Don's wife—of every decent, human attribute. Harold waited, rather coldly, for the story to be resumed.

"We were married." Don's voice was determined now, as if he were decided to be rid speedily of a distasteful business. "She seemed to extract a great deal of satisfaction out of her married title. At the time I hugged the thought that it was because she loved me. God!" He laughed contemptuously, stridently.

"She met an agreeable set—my work brought me in touch with all sorts of delightful and influential people. Well, let me hurry to the end of things. My dream was to make her happy. After that, I naturally wanted to be happy, too. It wasn't long before I found out that she cared only for admiration, although her ambition, mark you, was never once lost sight of. She read, studied, observed. Oh! she was clever, I swear to you. Her cleverness was dazzling.

"Then trouble came. It was over money. I simply couldn't supply her lust for money, clothes, the material advertisement of her beauty. She cared nothing for the trouble she plunged me in, the debts, embarrassments or difficulties. To satisfy her vanity, no indignity to me was even considered. She would even accept money from other men, so long as they would give it without hope of recompense. She was too calculating, too shrewd, to make the concessions they ultimately counted on.

"Finally I was dispatched abroad on a very important assignment. I went with a heart of lead, for by this time life had become well-nigh unbearable, and I burned with a thousand suspicions. Whenever she made an elaborate toilet and went out, I could not help fearing it was to some assignation with a rich infatuate. She lied to me recklessly, continually, even about trivial things. Truth she seemed to hold in aversion. I remember once when I tried to reason with her on the absolute necessity of perfect veracity between man and wife, she flouted me airily with an epigram she had picked up from a Mrs. Josey, a leader in a cult she was then following, to wit: "There's no such thing as matter. All is mind. So it cannot matter, and you should never mind it, if anyone tells a lie." She repeated this with so charmingly naïve a conviction of

its merits, and made such an adorable mouth at me, that I actually couldn't help laughing and kissing her.

"Well, I was gone three months. I had been very handsomely paid and had cabled most of my money back to Yetive. Somehow, I had begun to hope again—how the heart of man clings to delusions!—that a soul would dawn in my wife; that an infinite patience of loving devotion would win; that things, in short, might still come out right. All the way back on the boat I wondered how she'd greet me, and how we'd start all over again.

"When I reached Chicago, I reported at the office at once. I found a telegram there from Yetive. She asked me to meet her at a little Italian restaurant where we had often dined. Well, I did meet her, wondering. Harold—across the table that evening, with the orchestra playing 'La Paloma,'—she told me calmly and cold-bloodedly that hereafter, from right then, we would go our separate ways. She liked me well enough, she said, but she had ambitions which I clearly could not gratify then, or in the future and—well, she had sold everything in our cosy suburban house, and there wasn't any home for me to go to, that was all.

"She offered me her hand, and said I might give her a good-bye, good-luck kiss, if I wished, but I declined with a rough oath both kiss and handshake. To be historically exact, I think I used some pretty bad language to her, though I was trembling—drunk at the sight of her beauty, even then, and with memory of her treacherous, warm embraces. I believe I told her she was the very worst kind of a damned —, and she laughed and replied: 'You're a gentleman, finished by travel.' Then she sailed out.

"I settled the bill and astonished the waiter by tipping him a dollar. I don't exactly understand to this

day why I committed that blazing extravagance.

"I have never seen her from that hour. Soon as was legally practicable, she got a divorce—desertion or non-support, I forget which—I doubt if I even read the papers served upon me. She married again almost immediately. Her plans had been laid for months. The man was very much older than she, and could give her far more money than I. I was twenty-three the very day, Hal, she calmly showed me she had squeezed me dry; abolished my home; sold all my belongings, books, even cherished pictures given me by artist friends; taken the pretty large amount I had earned, and with which she intended to start out a new quest for money and glory.

"I saw pictures of her in studios and shops after that, and, once in a while, her name—the name she had invented and clung to, in spite of her new marriage, as if it had been a stage name. She was in Algiers for a time, and later it was there I heard her talked about considerably as a great new American beauty. An officer at the Russian legation in Algiers told me she had become a widow and was on the eve of a new marriage with a very wealthy consumptive Jew, who had purchased an Italian title. I had been sent over to Algeria to report the Morocco trouble. Hal, the Russian suspected her early connection with me, but of course, he forbore the slightest reference to it. That's the tale, up to date, my friend. That's all, and quite enough."

Harold shuddered. Earnestly desirous of laying the ghosts of memory, he asked irrelevantly:

"But, Don, why did you come back to Boston, of all places in the world, when you were doing such big things in those days? Just fancy being sent to Morocco on an assignment——!" His tone was enthusi-

astic and regretful; then he added hastily in a note of embarrassment: "I shouldn't have asked that foolish question. Of course it was to avoid a chance of meeting her."

Don spoke now with reluctancy, and quite slowly:

"No—it wasn't that, Hal. I took things very hard. I was criminally weak. For five years I walked in Hell. One day—I'd drifted 'way out West—I was desperate. I'd got about to the end of the string—hope included—when chance tossed me across the path of Dr. Clark. He was traveling through Oregon then on one of his queer missions. He put me on my feet again, and—well, I found that at certain times—when I had sunk into the slough of despond—Dr. Clark could always help me. So I came back—back to Boston to be near him. You'll know about that, too, some day. I don't want you to, but I'm afraid you will. Now let's drop the whole damned subject!"

All the resentment had oozed out of Harold's heart. He was beginning to comprehend many things. They had returned on their tracks, and now were nearly at their quarters. Don had relit his pipe, which during the long walk and talk had been neglected. He did not appear as dejected as at the start; and Harold felt that perfect silence fitted the present mood of his friend. When they reached their parlor, Harold still spoke no word. He merely wrung Don's hand, and retreated to his room and rest.

CHAPTER XIV

Don's Fall

SOME few days later, the august Senator notified Harold by telephone that he and Winn had some important matters to discuss with him and humbly desired his presence. Harold forthwith attended on these worthies. He found them foregathered in Jackberry's office.

After a few greetings and commonplaces, Harold asked bluntly:

"Well, how's the organization coming along? Any capital interested, yet? What prospects?"

"Excellent prospects!" exclaimed the Senator, beaming with satisfaction. "Couldn't be finer. Inside of three months we can do business, I'm positive."

"Three months!" ejaculated Harold, aghast. "Why—I—I should think three weeks would be an inordinately long time to wait!"

Jackberry smiled indulgently.

"My dear friend," said he, soothingly, "Rome wasn't built in a day. Large bodies move slowly, and this proposed body, this new corporation, bids fair to be very large indeed. Moreover, the proceedings in the Equity Court will, by themselves, take some weeks, even if we organize at once."

"The deuce!" ejaculated Harold. Jackberry only smiled the more.

"Unfortunate, but true," he murmured. "My dear sir, to a man whose ambition is to do things properly

and promptly, the Equity Court offers more stumbling-blocks and pitfalls of irritating delay than a common-sense imagination could conceive."

"Is it possible?" cried Harold, in anger.

"Winn knows the truth of what I say by personal experience," answered Jackberry. "How long was it, Calvin, they had your philanthropic head in chancery up there, and were pounding it, till you got me, and I succeeded in extricating you, at considerable loss? Four years, wasn't it? My dear Mr. Fitzgerald, we must steer clear, at the start, of any possible chance of getting involved there. The Equity Court is an infernal humbug which we took over from the procedure of England with a lot of other antediluvian truck. They call it there the Court of Chancery and, in the slang of the prize-fighter, getting an opponent's head into chancery quite expresses it. Law, in its expansion to meet modern conditions, hasn't marched abreast of modern business development. Law, anyway, is bad enough—take a lawyer's word for it!—but Equity—ugh!"

The final grunt hardly seemed to express the depth of the Senator's disgust at the Equity Court. He returned to the attack.

"My dear Harold, Mr. Fitzgerald, I should say," intervened Winn with tones of oily obsequiousness in sharp contrast to the Senator's bluntness, "we have here some of the documents of incorporation, already drawn up. Suppose we look them over, to-day. I was brought up as a plain man of business, and am only incidentally acquainted with the drawing-up of important documents. As a business man, and as a promoter who has been fairly successful in the way of interesting capital to make investments, I realize the importance of having all preliminaries arrayed in such

a smooth and inviting fashion that prospective investors of the large capital we need will not be deterred, and will have no possible temptation to find fault or to withdraw."

"I agree with all that," replied Harold, sturdily, after he had looked over the papers Jackberry handed him. "Yet it seems to me, begging the Senator's pardon, that most of this very involved and, to me, confusing, legal phraseology could be radically simplified, and would, if reduced to simplicity, make a more instant appeal to the capitalists we seek."

"I tell you what you do!" Senator Jackberry threw back his head and guffawed uproariously. "You take my legal verbiage home with you, and edit it, my dear sir; edit it according to your own notions of the eternal unfitness of things!"

"All right," replied Harold with pleased surprise. "That's just what I wanted to suggest; only I didn't want to seem presumptuous, or oblivious to the great labor you've taken in shaping up these papers."

"That's all in the day's work," answered Jackberry. "When you get the stuff into the shape you like it, we'll go over it again carefully to see whether you've omitted anything essential. You go home and edit me; then I'll edit you, and then we'll let Brother Winn mull it over finally like a Judicial Owl, to decide whether our joint brains have birthed a mountain, or a mouse."

When Harold departed with the big bundle of type-written matter, it was his first intention to ask Don Brush to play editor and to get that experienced writer's opinion as to just exactly what possible ramifications of meaning lay concealed in the verbal stew.

He had already begun to feel a certain vague unease—a subliminal suspicion—that he was going to

be played for that kind of a fish reputed to be hatched at the rate of one a minute. Yet it was really difficult to suspect so frank and bluff a fellow as Jackberry, a man who didn't pretend to be an altruist, a man endorsed by Sydney even more thoroughly in recent letters, and a graduate from Harvard, into the bargain.

Jackberry, to be sure, in spite of the Harvard halo, never, even in his smoothest moments, impressed Harold as being quite a gentleman. But Harold reflected, candidly, this might even constitute an argument in his favor. Still, Harold wished that with Senator Jackberry he could feel, as he did with Dr. Clark, he was listening to one from whose mere presence emanated the aura of the gentleman. Yet for all this, Jackberry struck him as increasingly likable.

Winn, on the contrary, had sunk a little from Harold's first esteem. Harold sensed a strong intuition that, however admirable Winn might be as a husband, father, or even as a friend, his philanthropy was not deep-rooted, like Dr. Clark's, but a fad, and perhaps a fad with a business purpose.

Don didn't appear early that evening, as he had promised. So Harold, making a wry face to himself, which was his mode of swearing, reluctantly undertook the task of editing.

Only one who has had much experience in analyzing documents devised by experts in legal chicane, could completely grasp the first effect made on Harold by Jackberry's involutions and interminable qualifications of statement.

As Harold pondered over it, all alone, reading a few closely-typewritten pages and then turning back to reestablish connection, he felt himself becoming stupider and stupider, and grew angry with a sense of baffle-

ment.

Nearly two hours he spent on this labor of Sisyphus, then flung the bunch of papers half across the room onto a sofa, seized his hat, and fled out into the moonlight. He walked in the direction of Allston till tired, took an open car back, and found himself agreeably drowsy.

Don had not yet returned, so Harold sought bed at once, determining to have another and more clear-headed battle next morning with Senator Jackberry's "preliminaries of organization."

When he summoned Don for breakfast, with a cheerful halloo, for he had slept splendidly and was feeling keen for a fresh encounter with the documents, no answer came to his call. He looked into Don's room. The bed had not been slept in. This, of course, had happened before and is likely to occur in any reporter's life. But this time Don's absence weighed on his mind. He could not repress a fear that something unpleasant had happened.

Harold returned to the bath-room, doffed his pajamas and took a long shower.

Had a sculptor glimpsed him there, he must have longed to attempt a reproduction in Parian marble. Fine as the youth's head was, his body more than matched it. Its perfect harmony recalled the Greek dream of an Adonis, pure and reluctant to be overpowered even by the Goddess of Passion herself.

Re-nerved by the cold shower, Harold resumed his pajamas, ate a sparing breakfast, cleared off the table in the sitting-room and again entered the lists against complicated chicanery.

It was nearing noon before he had finished his recasting of the preliminary agreements, as to how many shares of preferred stock and what bonuses of com-

mon should be allotted to the first suppliers of capital; how much to Jackberry and Winn; how much should be left in the treasury; what powers the Board of Directors were to exercise; and the length of their tenure of office.

The Constitution and By-laws, another voluminous array of pages, permitted a majority of the directorate to create subsidiary companies and contract indebtedness for all sorts of operations, from starting an endless chain of daily yellow journals, almost to establishing a line of airships to the Andes, or running an electric railway under the ocean.

What possibly could be the significance of a score and more of the singular provisos that Jackberry had contrived to insert amid copious circumlocutions that kept the mind going, like a squirrel in a revolving cage, but never arriving anywhere? As Harold paused at noontime more tired than if he had walked twenty miles, he could scarce resist the notion that the whole thing was just a grim, elaborate jest. Flushed and resentful, he leaned far back in his chair and let his eyes seek rest in vacancy.

Out of the corner most in shadow seemed to rise on his vision, strained by long intension, a face like a sinister mask. It was livid, sombre, with puffy, bloodshot, lustreless eyes adding a sort of horror to the dull-purplish tint of the sodden visage.

The hall-door knob turned; the door was pushed half open; something stood there stolidly hesitant.

Harold started, faced about, cried out: "Is that you, Don?"

No answer. Harold sprang up.

Fear—or the foreshadow of something stronger—held him back. He conquered it; sprang to the door; swiftly pulled it wide-open.

"*Don!*" he gasped.

Could this be his friend, the man who had won his confidence and deep respect?

The very features of the man had altered. Somebody else was looking out of the horribly changed eyes, glaring out at vacancy.

In Harold's mind, supreme intoxication had always been associated with the gutter in which, as a shuddering boy, he had seen some of the overworked, underpaid, underfed quarrymen of Dunkirk lying sprawled in the mire. That a man might keep his feet and yet be helpless was a new revelation. Only by a Herculean mental effort did Harold grasp the appalling fact that the hideous object before him was Don, and that Don was insanely drunk.

The Thing swayed forward. Harold, though with repulsion, caught it in his arms. It seemed heavier than so much lead, as Harold half bore, half dragged it, into Don's room and toppled it onto the bed.

Physical reaction now set in. Don began to breathe stertorously. The air about him reeked, nearly raising Harold's gorge by the rank odor that seemed almost a visible thickness.

Harold closed and locked the hall door; then stood gazing down at the strangely distorted face. His own had grown very pale; it looked cold, as if less touched of pity than disdain.

It may be—Harold's character had not then fully ripened—it may be, on his fine and high-bred face, there showed a trace of "ignorant virtue's proud intolerance"; for his nostrils quivered and his lip curled up.

This passed soon; but for full ten minutes he stood inertly looking at Don. A dreadful curiosity chained him thus. Then succeeded a numbness. He felt as

if Don, his Don, had gone away forever, and some other had found inhabitation in the body. Presently Don's words came back to memory: "I'm a creature of wounds that reopen—of cicatrices—of abysses!"

Loathing and horror vanished. Compassion took their place—an infinite compassion that ached in its intensity. And now he realized that he ought to undress Don and put him between covers.

As he stripped off all the clothes, no easy job, and rolled the body into bed, it seemed to him as if all the muscular, manly beauty of that body, even as of that face, had been stained and distorted, too, by the plunge in the vile abyss of alcohol.

He returned to the sitting-room, mechanically gathered up the legal papers littering the table, flung them into a hand-bag, and started to go out, forgetting for the moment that he was still in pajamas.

Then he dressed himself, still with a notion of leaving the scene for a while. But a profound weariness came upon him, and he stretched in the reclining lounge-chair, closing his eyes as if to shut out the stormy vision of horror. He fell presently into an uneasy doze, from which he was suddenly awakened by a hoarse voice calling:

"Water! *Water!*"

He brought a small pitcher to the bedside. Don, raising himself with difficulty, gulped it and murmured raucously, as he sank back on the pillows:

"Thank you, Hal! That will put me right for a spell. I was afraid this was coming—and you'd know. I saw Yetive yesterday. Was it yesterday?" His hand went, as if searchingly, to his forehead, and then down over the still blood-shot eyes. "Yetive hurried things along, that's all. It was bound to happen, anyway, I reckon. Now, I'll go to sleep again.

Forgive me, Hal!"

Harold laid a tender palm on the hot brow, sighing. Don turned his face to the wall, and with softer, more natural breathing, subsided into slumber.

CHAPTER XV

The Conspirators

HAROLD'S recast of the Jackberry formulæ of mystification was received by the Senator with external gravity and internal amusement. To placate his promoters by treating them generously, Harold had largely increased the allotment of stock to Messrs. Jackberry & Winn, in case they succeeded in securing large investors within sixty days. When Jackberry's eye lit on this addition, he had extreme difficulty in forbearing a chuckle over such a transparent incentive to rapidity of action. Harold, who noticed him lingering over this part in his reading of the revision, candidly spoke up:

"I thought, Senator, you were a little modest, perhaps, in your allotment of shares to yourself and Mr. Winn for services to be rendered. I don't want to be picayunish in any respect. I thought, too, that perhaps this increase might inspire you to immediate action. While I don't need money for personal expenses, I'm in a heart-breaking hurry to get hold of a big bunch of it as quick as possible, to do things with of another sort altogether!"

"Ah!" was the Senator's perfunctory comment, his vulture beak still dipped into Harold's manuscript and his eyes glinting with a grim merriment over his own thoughts.

"I've long wanted to improve the conditions of life for the world's workers," continued Harold. "The

other night, Senator, I heard a speaker here in Faneuil Hall who stirred me all up; made me feel that the true field for a young man's energies ought to be more than a local one. I'm going to strike hands with the Socialists. I'm going to get into the game, Senator, and do my part in the political and mental awakening of the people. The fight calls me. I must get into it! And *that's* why I need so much money and need it right away!"

"Ah?" said the Senator, in a tone that sounded encouragement to proceed. Then he added, after a momentary pause, laying down his papers and looking Harold square in the face. "Who was the speaker? Our splendidly eloquent, but nevertheless thoroughly crazy Revolutionist, Dr. George Clark? Well, I don't wonder much at his effect on a young, impressionable Westerner like you. I've heard him, too. He's a corker in his way; or, rather I should say, a would-be uncorker of all the vials of popular wrath on our present system of civilization.

"Between you and me, Mr. Fitzgerald, this isn't, I admit, the best of all possible republics in our best of all possible worlds. No doubt, it'll go to pot with a Hell of a whoop, some day. Yet I guess it will last our time, and probably the time of my young Jackberries. Dr. George is a dangerous agitator. With the speciously practical plan of reconstructing society that Socialism proposes, as his apparent platform, he's the kind of moral savage, or savage moralist—they seem the same thing—who would precipitate chaos. Dr. Clark, and men like him, are more dangerous, because they're in dead earnest."

"I'm glad to hear you give him that credit!" answered Harold.

"Oh! we've got to be fair," said Jackberry lightly.

"What's the use of denying things that are so, or declining to look a fact squarely in the face? But what you've just said has switched me onto another track of thought. You're bursting with a new ambition. I don't approve it; but it's no damn business of mine. I'm not your guardian or keeper. If you choose to be a crack-brained visionary, if you even want to finance Dr. Clark's Revolution, it's none of my concern, much as I like you and would like to see you go on prospering practically and become a multi-millionaire."

He paused, and his eyes twinkled good-humoredly.

"What's this preamble coming to?" asked Harold. "Where's your new track of thought carrying us?"

"Why, Mr. Fitzgerald," answered the Senator gravely, "I foresee, just from casually glancing over your editing of my copy, that it's going to mean considerable time and perhaps cause some vexation of spirit before we can even begin to do business. You have your own ideas as to methods, and you're naturally set on them. I'm not blaming you; that's your privilege. Now, a head like yours that at twenty, or twenty-one, by God! could evolve such an invention as yours, must have lots of other inventions locked up in it. You want a wad, quick. Why not sell this thing outright? I'll agree, in writing, to get you a million for it, and I'll plank down as a forfeit ten thousand dollars, all the cash I have in bank. If I don't hand you a million by the first of September, the invention is yours again, and you're ten thousand in pocket. I'll draw the agreement and hand you the check right now, if you say the word."

Harold was not even grazed by the golden arrow. Instead, he continued calmly:

"Senator, if you can raise a million for me in such

a way, by September, why shouldn't you also be able to raise a million for starting the manufacture on a big scale, and hand me half of it? Instead of the amount of stock now estimated by you as necessary to offer the men who back us, I will give them a quarter interest; that is to say, five millions of preferred stock for a million in cash, half of which will go right into the business. I'll take half the cash and give you a hundred thousand for your services, plus half a million in stock. I'll give Mr. Winn half as much in cash and stock, if he helps you in this deal. The rest of the stock, barring my controlling interest, namely, about four and a quarter millions, I will agree to leave in a pool to be bought within six months by any of the original backers or promoters, at twenty-five cents on the dollar, the residue to go to the general public at fifty cents on the dollar for pro rata division among the original stock-holders. How does that strike you? Isn't it perfectly feasible?"

The Senator tossed back his head and chortled.

"It's alluring, all right!" he answered. "I'm not saying, right off the reel, it might not be feasible. A proposition for men to put up a million cash to own a big thing entirely, or almost entirely, isn't out of the ordinary business order, big as it seems. A proposition for men to invest half a million to be applied strictly for manufacturing and operating expenses, they to receive an eighth interest, or two and a quarter millions in stock, for their cash, with a controlling vote in the directorate, as a safeguard, while their cash is being expended—the way we mapped our campaign before you got a new notion—is quite within the bounds of business order. But to induce men to hand over, besides half a million for foundational expenses, another half million as a premium to an inventor, who

retains a controlling interest, is a proposition quite beyond the scope of common experience, and which, you'll pardon my frankness, would impress the vast majority of prospective investors as nervy—very nervy. Still, it might be put through. Only, it would probably take a deuce of a lot of time; and you are in a hurry; and so am I, and all the rest of us uneasy Americans, for that matter."

"I suppose we are all of us altogether too much in a hurry," assented Harold.

"Beyond a doubt!" replied the Senator. "It doesn't pay, in the long run. Though I work like an engine, when I *do* work, I miss no opportunity to relax a little, and go slow, or go to my clubs. I don't propose to die before my time. No, sir, not I! Most of us Americans remind me of a boy named Joe Baker I once knew in Medfield. He was overheard one morning, as follows: 'I want my bread and butter, and I want the butter thick, and I want jam on it, and if I don't get it quick, *I'll holler!*'"

Harold laughed. The Senator was really such a jolly, entertaining fellow, after all, that his voluminous and intricate sentences, when composing legal documents, might be cheerfully forgiven. But now Harold returned to the business at issue.

"Tell me, Senator," he inquired, "what's the use of our getting pioneers to create subsidiary companies and perform so many functions widely beyond the scope of our fundamental business?"

The lawyer's answer was ready.

"That's foresight, based on experience, my young friend. You see, the time might come, when we should find it advisable to undertake some particular branch of business in order to prevent some smart Alec from jumping in and holding us up for exceeding our char-

ter rights. Or some chap, organizing in opposition with a new invention, might give us no end of trouble before we could squelch him."

"Oh! I begin to see. Well, Senator, let's try to arrive at something speedily, at any rate. Suppose you take a day to think over my latest proposition. I see it appeals to you."

"It does. Anything nervy, anything western, always did. I'll confer with Winn about it. I'll 'phone him over here this afternoon. Maybe, he's got some chaps on his line, already, to whom he's given an inkling of the bigness of this thing we have right here in my safe, to be examined by men who mean business. Winn's a rapid mover. I'd not be a bit surprised if he already had two or three nibbling at the bait—keen to have a peek, anyway, soon as we say 'Ready!' and raise the curtain."

The Senator's metaphors were mixed, but his manner, and the suggestion of Winn's possible activity as an advance-agent, encouraged Harold, who now rose, feeling that he must not consume too much of the Hon. Jacob Jackberry's precious time in mere talk.

Next afternoon another conference was held, with about the same results. Nothing definite was agreed on; but, in confirmation of the Senator's guess, Winn admitted that he had "in a guarded, a very guarded, way, let leak, to some big men, that a certain western inventor—a genius—with Senator Jackberry and himself, had a hen on, whose hatch was likely to astound the industrial world," and that the big men "wanted to have a peep at the eggs of the hen aforesaid." Jackberry grinned his approval of the fine legality of the phrase, "hen aforesaid," and Harold felt pleased with the outlook. Evidently, after all, they meant to let no grass grow under their feet.

The following day brought up, for consideration, Jackberry's re-editing of Harold's laborious emendation of the first batch of preliminary agreements.

"The Universal Power Company," Jackberry proposed to christen it, instead of "The Fitzgerald New Force Company," or "The Geo-Kinetic Company." This latter was a name Harold had under consideration, because his invention embraced the mechanical application of the discovery of a new element of power, subtler and more easily manageable than electricity, inherent in certain areas of earth, and capable of condensation or pressure into small slabs, or briquettes, of intense and almost inexhaustible, radio-activity—like radium, only more vigorous—to supply operative energy to all imaginable forms of machinery.

"The Neo-Geo-Kinetic Company" was finally agreed upon, Jackberry adding the "Neo" so that the name should signify "The New Earth-Power Company." The Senator's closing argument was that people liked a name which could be easily brevified and snappily uttered.

"They'll drop the 'Kinetic' part of the combination," said he, "and soon be talking about the 'Neo-Geo' and the wonders it achieves. Then," he added with a grin, "will be the time for us to re-organize and vastly increase the number of shares, so that every mother's son in the country, with a few dollars to spare, can buy a little of it."

"That would be grand!" cried Harold enthusiastically. "It would democratize the possession, and the people at large would feel that they owned the 'Neo-Geo' with all its present and potential blessings, just as they already feel they own the Government."

"Which they don't," remarked Jackberry sardonically. "But the illusion, however, is beneficial to the

few who do."

He showed no outward sign, but was vastly amused inside at Harold's interpretation of his purely greedy suggestion of a future re-organization and multiplication of shares. Winn, however, gave tongue in key, for he said with extreme unction, summing up his blandest benevolence: "Excellent ultimate, indeed, Mr. Fitzgerald, as you truly say; for that would be a practical philanthropy on a scale almost colossal."

"Voted unanimously, then," cried Jackberry, "that we shall be popularly called 'The Neo-Geo,' and officially 'The Neo-Geo-Kinetic Company.' So much, at least, may be considered settled. Now for the next point!"

The next point ended in a long argumentation in which Winn sometimes took one side, sometimes another, a sort of shuttlecock batted from Harold's corner to Jackberry's, with rather surprising celerity. This point failed of settlement, that day.

Thus the game went on for a fortnight with nothing agreed upon beyond the name and about half of the Constitution and By-Laws. Jackberry and Winn, however, had introduced two gentlemen from Lynn, said to have millions on tap. After seeing the machine in operation, drawing power from its briquette just by contact of a little copper wire, they gravely declared it looked good to them, and that they might, if certain concessions were made, undertake to furnish the capital.

They were particular, however, in stipulating that control of the voting powers of the Board of Directors must be lodged in their hands for a period of at least ten years. Finally they came down to five, with a proposal that Harold, as president of the Company, should have a salary of \$15,000 a year during that period, and the other directors, seven all told, a salary

of \$7,500 each, with a lien on first profits.

This did not appear unreasonable to Harold; although such a salary list, by virtue of the lien involved, constituted a debt of nearly half a million against the company; and if its affairs were mismanaged by the directorate during the first year, complications might ensue, which would enable the directorate to readjust matters so as to secure a great deal more of the stock.

He demurred at vesting the control of the business in a directorate the majority of whom he could not rely upon as personal friends. He did not feel sure of Jackberry or Winn, and wanted Dr. Phillips, with Don, in whose trustworthiness [despite the recent terrible revelation of alcoholism] he firmly believed, and perhaps Dr. Clark, if that gentleman could be interested, to constitute with himself the majority of the directorate.

It did not occur to him that the two gentlemen from Lynn were lay-figures, henchmen of Jackberry, drilled to play their present parts, just as they had often been drilled to give false witness in trials where it had been quite safe to use them.

After a long conference on a very hot day, Jackberry pressed him to sign some papers purporting to be an agreement as to the directorate along Harold's own lines, with a proviso that in case the parties ready to furnish the money should retire and others take their place, the stock to be assigned to them should be put into a pool with Jackberry as trustee; and that any new set of investors, constituting only three-sevenths of the directorate, should have the privilege, if dissatisfied with the way things were going, of having any matter settled by arbitration. Harold, thoroughly tired, was very much tempted to yield.

He had also been under a pressure which is one

of the commonest, simplest, and therefore least suspected trick of business adventurers of the Winn and Jackberry tribe. He did not notice that, at every conference, the chair in which he sat was usually central, or medial on the circle, of the group who were arguing points with him, so that the gaze of all was combinedly focussed upon him.

Nor did he note the still more influential fact that the chairs occupied by the others had higher seats than his own, so that they were looking down at him, whilst he, without knowing it, had to be continually looking up a little, and often lifting his upper eyelids unconsciously. This tires the eyelids, makes them droop over the eyes and induces mechanically a kind of drowsiness, akin to a preliminary condition favorable to hypnotism; and gradually dulls resistive energy through contention with a physical drawback. Thus, in some degree, it weakens the resistance of the will.

In couple with the focussing of several pairs of eyes upon one, this mere mechanical trick is often ultimately very effective. If it does not succeed in lulling the intellect considerably and putting it off its guard, it is likely to effect such an unease in fighting off repeated slight attacks of drowsiness or dullness, that at last the victim assents to some proposal recurrently insisted upon, which he, at the beginning of the session, would have had naught of; gives irritable assent, complete or partial, just to get rid of the thing or have it out of the way.

This influence now almost overmastered Harold. But presently, by a violent effort of the will, he suddenly pushed away the temptation besetting him to sign the proffered papers, announced decisively that he would sign nothing till Dr. Phillips was on the spot, and declared that he would telegraph Phillips to come at once.

He added, rather ungraciously:

"Senator Jackberry, I'm growing so tired of all this beating about the bush, when I'm ready to make so many persons independently rich, that, if we can't do things my way, I'll be tempted to make a present of this invention to the Government, and quit inventing. This difficulty and delay is getting on my nerves. Honor bright, Senator, I hardly slept a wink last night or the night before."

"I don't blame you a damn bit for being annoyed," replied Jackberry amiably. "My advice is, go and forget it till Phillips arrives. Let's come round to the Club and crack a small bottle, then you take my auto—I shan't need it today—and spin Miss Winn out to Norumbega Park. That'll tone up your nerves. Then take a swim tonight at one of the clubs where you're put up—the Athletic's a good place—and you'll sleep like a top and wake up a new man!"

Winn and the supposed money-magnates from Lynn laughed in chorus; and Harold, a bit ashamed of his irritability, replied: "I'll take part of your advice, anyway, Senator. I'll borrow your auto, and ask Mrs. Winn's permission to carry off her daughter for a couple of hours."

He shook hands all round, and the Senator handed him a hastily scribbled order on the garage. When he had gone, the millionaires from Lynn melted away, in obedience to a nod from the Senator.

Jackberry and Winn, left alone, looked each other full in the eyes. Jackberry locked the door and then, from the private cabinet in his desk, produced a bottle and two glasses. Winn began to shake his head, thought better of it, and tossed off a stout drink of brandy, neat.

"Have some fizz for your next?" asked the Senator,

producing a siphon. Winn held out his empty glass. The Senator gave himself twice as much brandy in a tall glass, and squirted in a little soda, as if it were something to be used charily. Having gulped this, he composed another to sip, and leaned back in his chair, regarding Winn very intently, as though sizing up his nerve.

"Does it—er—mean that we'll have to take—er—radical measures?" Winn faltered.

"Precisely!" answered the Senator. "Radical measures for this radical pup. That's appropriate, as well as imperative. Phillips realized it from the kick-off. I, being a very cautious and very humane cuss in a small way, thought the trick might be turned otherwise by getting the company formed, and then snarling things up, and buying him out. But this cur wouldn't be content to back out; he'd put up a scrap and try to bite. All our straight propositions he's turned down; he won't sell; he persists in his crazy notion of controlling the stock and the actions of the directorate."

"Yes, and he's beginning to act as if he even distrusted us, *us*, who have been so considerate of him!"

Winn tried to grin virtuously, but still showed nervousness, and held out his glass again, into which the Senator poured a stiffer dose of brandy.

"Did you notice the remark he let fall about the danger of a majority of the directorate throwing the thing into a receivership?" asked Jackberry, composedly. "Looks as if he'd been picking up some extra legal opinions somewhere. We can't afford to waste any more time. He might slip away from us. He's a headstrong crank; wants it all his own way. Legitimate business safeguards don't seem to enter into his scheme of things at all. Damme, it's like trying

to talk business with a child, or a *lunatic*!”

Winn started a little at the word, brought out with emphasis, although he had expected it.

“You mean, then, to take this extreme—course?” The last word came in such a scared whisper as to be hardly audible. Winn by himself was a coward. Jack-berry wasn’t, except on instinct, when confronted by a clearly superior force.

“We must—you and I, my dear Luther—Calvin, I mean—with his great and good friend, Dr. Phillips; we must carefully have him committed into the good long keeping of those who will kindly help the poor young Hamlet of inventors to recover his wits,” said Jack-berry. “Don’t you get pulpy at this stage of the game, Winn. Bless you, man, it’s done every day, in the business world. It’s necessary. More than that, it will be doing a philanthropic service to society at large. Do you get me, Calvin? Fitzgerald is three-quarters crazy now. Why, we’ve had his own physician’s word for that long ago. He comes from a cracked family. There’s millions—*millions*—in this invention. We can’t risk the loss of them! I’ve kept those other fellows in the background. They’re getting restive, now. They might put spies on us, find our man, and try to deal with him direct. I wouldn’t trust a bloody mother’s son of ’em. *You* know that State Street crowd!”

He paused a minute to take a sip. Winn grunted assent.

“I was willing enough, Cal, to try and see whether this thing couldn’t be swung on the level, or thereabouts, but it can’t,” he presently resumed. “The pup’s a scrapper. We’ve got to play the game now according to the top rule of business, or get out of the shuffle—licked before the start, because we’re cowards. I’m not *that*, anyway, by God! We’ll get hold

of this thing ourselves, then negotiate with State Street, and put Tom Lawson on the sick-list before long. But we've got to act—now—*now*, Calvin, do you hear me?"

"Don't speak so loud, for God's sake, Senator! I'm not deaf!" expostulated Winn, glancing about, with trepidation.

"Here's a letter from Phillips I haven't shown you," said Jackberry. "It came late yesterday. See, it says Fitzgerald has written him about vexatious delays and hints that if the matter isn't settled mighty soon, he has other plans. Don't you see it's financial suicide for us to drop out now and let him get the capital interested? And here's another letter from Phillips, this morning. Says he has written Fitzgerald that he's coming here at once, to join in a delicate operation. 'Delicate operation' is good! Ha! Ha!"

"Now, as soon as Phillips comes, we'll carry this business through, quietly, without the least fuss. Phillips has always known it must come to this, but wanted us to be on such friendly terms with Fitzgerald that, if it ever should be aired in court, it would look right, all round. Phillips has a good head; would have made a fine lawyer. With Fitzgerald out of the way, the rest's a cinch! Of course, Calvin, it'll only be for a few years—we don't mean murder, man—and then we'll bring about his release. By that time his half-baked anarchist notions will have been swatted out of him, and it won't be dangerous, won't be unphilanthropic, Calvin, to let him loose again on society!"

Jackberry refreshed himself with another swallow, and leaned back with satisfaction. He seemed to have said his say. Silence, a few moments. Winn was looking at his pal in a sort of fear-tinged admiration. His rather apoplectic face, despite the two drinks he had taken, had become a shade less ruddy, and his fat

fingers twitched a little, as Jackberry contemptuously noted.

"How—can it—be—arranged?" he finally asked, his voice trembling.

"Nothing simpler!" replied he of the vulture face, quite nonchalantly. "It'll be a mere matter of detail, after Phillips gets here and takes Fitzgerald in tow as his best friend, and—physician."

"Oh, yes! I see!" assented Winn with relief. "Yes, yes, there's Phillips, to be sure, a doctor, like my brother. Both good authorities on nerves and brains. Yes, yes, of course, we couldn't put the thing through with Phillips left out.

Senator Jackberry guffawed. Was his unctuous pal really braced up enough to be thinking the same thought which had once occurred to himself: the cruel necessity of having to share the loot?

"I should rather guess not!" he forcibly ejaculated. Then he added, rising from his chair:

"Now, Cal, old man, let's come over to the Club and stir our brandy into better circulation through our system with a little of the fizz that looks and whispers like gold!"

CHAPTER XVI

Strange Meetings

ON Harold's return from motoring with Miss Winn, a really nice girl who had no sinister intentions of adding his scalp to her belt, but felt a frank friendliness for him, he found the letter from Sydney about coming to Boston "to join in a delicate operation," and was well pleased.

This letter seemed to him as if Providence were taking a hand in a fresh deal and making it natural that Sydney should come to his rescue, from what he had begun to feel was a gigantic web of business being implacably spun about him.

He rejoiced to feel that he had never for an instant suspected Sydney of designedly exposing him to capture in the meshes, business and social, of Jackberry and Winn. Sydney was not to blame for their attitude of mind or the vexatious delays. Sydney, his optimism cried out, would speedily bring them to terms, so that the organization of "The Neo-Geo" might proceed as a bound into the light, instead of being a leap in the dark.

So Harold hastened to the nearest telegraph booth and wired impetuously: "Come at once. I need you very badly. Almost a case of brain-storm."

How terrible a surprise would Harold have experienced, had he been able to see and to interpret the evil smile that lighted up the physician's face at sight of that fateful word: "Brain-storm!" For what better

cumulative evidence could there be, than that self-revelatory telegram offered of its author's mental infirmity? Here to the Doctor's hand was a statement, by Harold himself, of standing on the brink of the abyss—a plea for help. What a bonanza; what a boon!

That proneness to superstition, concealed in most of us, a touch of which Harold showed in his feeling at receipt of Sydney's letter in so pat a chime with his desire, had its counterpart in the musings of Sydney Phillips when he put that unexpected treasure of a telegram into his wallet, and rebuttoned his Prince Albert. He trod more alertly now, head high-poised, and at once began preparations for his journey.

So then, the hour had struck at last! Fate was calling him to Boston in golden tones—to Boston, where he knew a woman was awaiting him, as well as fortune, thrice lucky Sydney Phillips!

A woman! Barbara Avery? Ah, no! The Doctor had almost forgotten that such a person had ever existed or ever held any lure for him. He was enamored, this time, of a fitting life-mate.

This superbly sensuous goddess of his dreams, whom he had long known and hoped in vain to possess, had come back, at last, into *pourparlers* with him; for he had told her that fortune unlimited lay just ahead. So, Vampire that she was, she now was waiting in Boston for him, and she was to be his as soon as he could take her on a splendid trip around the world; these were the terms of sale and barter.

Her name was—Yetive Soule.

As the hour approached when Sydney Phillips should be due in Boston, Harold invited Don to go with him to the station.

"Sorry not to be on deck to greet your friend and make him mine too, but I've got to square myself at

the office," the reporter declined.

Noting a sombre look overspread Don's face, Harold's eyes asked an anxious question which Don answered gravely: "Don't worry about me, old man! If I go wrong again, I'll have Dr. Clark straighten me up. It wouldn't be the first time," he added grimly.

"Is there any reason for supposing that you will—again?"

Harold's tone was full of pain. With a note of pleading, Don placed his hand on Harold's arm.

"When the spells come on me," said he, "the Brush you know has gone out of my body and some one else—a Caliban, a beast—is in control. You can't reason or argue with him—no use to try——!" He paused, then turned on his heel with an abrupt: "I'll see you later, my lad, when I'm sure of myself."

Harold watched him for a moment, his heart contracting at the droop in Don's shoulders, then turned his footsteps toward the South Station. "Three hours late," said a placard. Harold, considering how to spend that interval, took a car up-town, remembering a much-advertised National Art Exhibit.

He was not sorry for his choice. The exhibit proved remarkable for its variety and high range. The public interested him, too, as it grouped here or there about a picture for earnest discussion of its merits.

In Room Two he stood for a while before some studies of beautiful women. His enjoyment of the beauty of this mere paint led him to reflect, with fresh wonder, that at his age he still was heart-whole and fancy-free.

He had, of course, been possessed by boyish expectations, by visions of the dawning of the only girl in his life; and in those years when his invention was in travail to be born, he had hoped ardently that he might

be already successful before *she* should come. Then, almost imperceptibly, she had slipped out of his mind, nor could he say at what precise hour she had ceased to inhabit his house of dreams. He only knew that it had strange tenants now. Gaunt, big-eyed, wistful children looked out of its windows, watching for his coming; exploited, labor-broken workers, crushed and mangled miners, hopeless old men and patient, slaving women—a thousand faces, all appealing, all beseeching help. And over and over again he felt himself straining toward those people in his dream-house, and the soul of him cried out yearningly, like the god in pain which John Keats heard yearning in music:

“I am coming—I am coming—to your help!”

Presently he turned from the pictured faces and took seat on a bench. In doing so he became aware that the interest of the crowd seemed centered in a canvas on the north wall. Unable to catch even a glimpse of it from where he sat, he strolled over to it.

He gasped at sight of the portrait. Yes, it must be she! There couldn't be two, so like. The slight difference discernible lay in the pose and garb. Beyond a doubt it was painted from Don's wife; and the painter must have been an uncompromising man of genius, for he had fixed on his canvas the under-hint of repellence, of repulsiveness, amid the riot of charm, the rich flames of sensuous allurement. Even as the hair seemed capable of burning one's fingers, the whole face, neck and faintly glimpsed breasts would be certain to burn up a man's heart, if ever he stooped to the lure.

Harold studied it calmly. Ay, all was there in perfection—the large red-hazel eyes, black-lashed; the poignantly vivid, scarlet poinsettia mouth; the subtly voluptuous oval chin tempting a caressive hand to cup itself about the beauty of that delicate, almost elusive,

curve. Harold consulted his catalogue for the title of the picture, with a queer thrill of anticipation.

There it was—No. 17—"The Vampire!"

Sometimes we are astonished at the apparition of what we expect. In spite of himself, Harold was startled. The painter, daring as well as uncompromising, had not balked at giving this name to his deed in color, although it challenged memory and provoked comparison between his work and that of Sir Edward Burne-Jones. He had clearly recognized the characteristics of a Vampire in the face of Don's wife, and had portrayed her to the life.

Harold still was at gaze, when a woman, tall and with a slenderness that suggested a lily-stalk, came close to him, scrutinizing the picture. She was veiled. Just for an instant Harold's glance met hers through the veil, and he was conscious of a distinct physical shock, electric in its intensity. He sat down on the nearest bench and watched the woman with overpowering curiosity.

It had seemed to him that through the meshes of the disguising veil he had seen two mesmeric red-hazel eyes, and his heart beat fast in the sudden wondering: could this be Yette herself? Don had said she still was in Boston; and—why, yes, of course—she had a hobby for pictures; was a model in fact, ambitious to be considered a professional beauty. Now Harold's excitement increased, for in order to get a better view the woman had raised her veil.

She was, for the bare moment, alone in front of the picture, and Harold was unable to see her face. At that minute her purse dropped and fell a little back of her. She tugged at her veil, but it had caught. With a hurried movement she stooped for the purse, and for a swift second Harold caught a clear glimpse of her

face, three-quarters. It was the original of the picture—no shadow of a doubt obscured that fact. Harold found himself trembling.

But was this flesh and blood vampire Don's former wife? How could she have sat for a picture and let it be labelled thus? One might have supposed that she, instead of taking it all so serenely, would have stilettoed the artist, and slashed the picture to ribbons. But she still stood before the picture, calm as a statue, her veil now down; and Harold continued to study her in combination with that eerie, uncanny reproduction of all her lithesome slenderness, more alluring than voluptuous curves. Yet for all that slenderness and svelte allurements, her face was not that of a girl. It was that of a mature, seductive woman.

She passed on, finally, into another room and so did Harold. Trailing her, he noted that she paused before no pictures except those of women. Was she comparing them with her own loveliness? he asked; and lost himself in endless conjectures, till, with a start, he remembered the train and looked at his watch. It was due in half an hour.

Reluctantly he made for the corridor; and in departing realized that he must have been reminded of the train by seeing the vampire-woman consult a tiny, jewelled watch and look impatiently toward the door.

They had both been in the last room. A number of people were coming through the door; and, as he waited, he heard a voice behind him softly cry: "Sydney!" He turned involuntarily. The vampire-woman had lifted her veil. Sydney Phillips, whom he was just going to meet, was clasping both her hands, his face alive with emotion. He had come in with the others, and he and Harold had not seen each other.

Harold, amazed and horrified, instinctively slipped

into the corridor out of their line of vision, and stood stone-still. His thoughts were chaos. Just what to do in this extraordinary situation he could not yet decide. One thing, however, clarified itself. This woman might be the original of the Vampire picture, but she certainly could not be Don's former wife. That must be impossible, since Dr. Phillips knew her with such evident familiarity.

To gain time for reflection, he went back to Room Two and sat down on the bench again in front of the Vampire picture. He must decide quickly whether to make his presence known to Dr. Phillips. Before his mind was made up, he saw coming through the door from an adjoining room, none other than Don himself. Obeying an irresistible impulse, Harold arose and hurried toward him.

"What are you doing here, Don?" he asked nervously, trying hard to seem matter-of-fact.

"Hullo," said Don, looking fagged, the blue circles under his eyes making them darker and wilder than ever. "I'm where I ought to be—covering this exhibit for the morning's issue. What's on your mind, Hal?" He tried to smile.

Harold came to a second swift resolution. "I've been studying a remarkable picture," he said, composedly now. "Come and look at it."

"Ay, ay, you're right—it's Yetime—it's my wife," muttered Don, a moment later.

Harold, expecting every moment to see the vampire-woman and Dr. Phillips walk through the door, said in an altered voice:

"Don—*she*—is in the furthest studio. Come on! Let's go!"

But Don stood perfectly still, staring at Harold.

"Come, Don!" exclaimed Harold authoritatively.

Don laughed. "When a lady, who has played the rôle of wife to a man, happens to be near after a lapse of years, may there not be a quite pardonable curiosity to behold her once more? I had only a glimpse of her the other day. I'll have a full feast of eyes on her now. I'm going to find her!"

He started for the open door, but Harold laid a firm grip on his arm, and spoke swiftly:

"Don, she's with Sydney—Dr. Phillips—the man I was on my way to meet. His train was late. I came here to while away a couple of hours. I was looking at her picture, when she arrived. I knew her through her veil. I was following her movements out of curiosity, when I was amazed, a few moments ago, to see Dr. Phillips meet her here, as if they were old friends. I shudder for him, if he's fallen under her spell. He doesn't know I'm here, and I haven't decided what to do."

A woman pressed up to look at the Vampire picture. Don, in astonishment at Harold's words, halted as if thunderstruck. The next second, Yette Soule on Dr. Phillips' arm came through the open door.

The Doctor, for just a second, met Harold's embarrassed look. Yette's mesmeric eyes rested on Don but a moment, then were carelessly turned away.

The man who had been husband to this woman understood, as plainly as if the words had been spoken aloud, her swift facial expressions of surprise, of recognition and of ready denial in ambush.

Sydney's glance at Harold had been one of belated though silent recognition, and Harold had comprehended. With an imperative pull on Don's arm he passed through the door, on into the corridor. Don was rather white and silent, as they stepped out into the street. But what his thoughts were, who could say?

CHAPTER XVII

Two of a Kind

YETIVE and the Doctor did not tarry long in the art-gallery. Despite all his aplomb, Phillips was rather badly shaken, and felt eager to be in the open air. He drew a deep breath of relief, when he and his companion had safely reached the sidewalk. As they turned toward Arlington Street, Yetive asked softly, "What did you think of it?"

Her companion's face brightened for a moment.

"Think of it?" he exclaimed. "What could anyone think, except that it's the most beautiful face in the world and, of course, the most striking picture of the exhibit—but"—his eyes lost their glow—"what in heaven's name did the artist mean by calling it 'The Vampire'? Yetive, I can't permit that!"

Yetive laughed with a lightness that still held some bitterness in its melody.

"My dear Sydney," she replied, "who gave you any authority in the matter? As for me"—she shrugged her shoulders—"I had no choice. I was Henri de Sallier's model. He was painting 'The Vampire' for this exhibit. Could I dictate the subject of his picture? And even if I could have," she said deliberately, "I wouldn't have done it. I was well paid and—I have to live."

A look of pain softened the face of Sydney Phillips for the moment. His early hold on Barbara was understandable.

"Yetive," said he passionately, "it won't be much longer! You are justified in demanding a background of wealth for your beauty, your fine tastes, your artistic qualities. This business that has brought me to Boston concerns you. Most of all it concerns our future, Yetive, and means a mountain of money, where you can sit enthroned, secure forever, able to gratify your slightest whim!"

Yetive turned eagerly. "Is there any immediate prospect of success? Will it come soon?" she demanded.

"Yes, very soon," he answered firmly. "I must leave you almost at once, on this very business. I have an appointment within the hour. My train was late, as I told you. I expected to have had the interview immediately after my arrival and then to have come over here, where you had appointed our meeting. Not finding my man at the station I telephoned to his quarters and left word with the janitor there that I would come later. Then I hurried to you. We must arrange, dearest, for a private view of the picture. I saw my man there, and he saw me, and looked astounded; and it rather threw me off my balance."

"What did he look like?" Yetive's tone grew suddenly sharp.

"They were in front of your picture, near the bench," said Sydney nervously, "a medium-sized, finely-built chap, with reddish hair, hair almost auburn, like yours—you must have noticed him, unless all your attention," he added with tender suggestion, "was concentrated on my unworthy self."

She flashed him an approving smile. He continued: "He was in company with a stouter man, who seemed under a cloud. A loose rake, I should say, probably the reporter-friend he's written me about several

times."

"I remember them perfectly now," said Yetive. "I noticed them casually, though really I had eyes only for you, and my beautiful picture." So charmingly naïve was her confession that Sydney thrilled at the words. She continued carelessly: "Seems to me I've seen one of those men before in some corner of the world; the sullen, drinky-looking one."

"Very likely," answered Sydney. "Reporters are turning up everywhere, and men who drink heavily are quite apt to be nomads."

"What are nomads, dear?"

"Wanderers, vagabonds, gypsies, Bedouins—persons without fixed habits, and therefore without respectability."

"Oh!" said Yetive, "I thought nomads were something in chemistry or philosophy or science, like atoms, or molecules, or microbes."

He laughed delightedly.

"My darling has confused the word nomad with monad, I guess," said he. "But even your blunders, dear, are full of charm. By my soul, what a sorceress, what a perfect witch you are, little one!"

Her admirer's oath both startled and vaguely amused her. Was it possible, after all, there might be such a thing as a soul; and possible that Sydney had one, or believed in such a foolish thing? She had felt from the first of her experience with him that he was more like herself, and therefore more potentially endowed with attractiveness for her, than any other man she had ever met. He had interested her, indeed, so much that she knew, were she a very rich woman, she would have picked him as her husband; or, if saddled with a rich husband, would have taken him in tow as her "Cavalier Sirbiento," a phrase whose meaning

she had learned in Italy.

"Sydney," she said languidly, "here we are at my hotel. You'd better not come up now, but keep that appointment. It means everything to me, dear, as well as to you, that you should make a great big bunch of money; for I confess I *do* like you a little bit more than I ever thought I should ever be able to like any man. Don't clutch my arm so tightly! You'll make a black and blue spot. Perhaps, you bad boy, you're trying to put your brand on me?" She laughed lightly, then her tone grew reminiscent. "The men in my life, Sydney—I shudder to think of them. They have been such cruel disappointments! If I had felt for any of them, as I feel toward you, it might have all been different. I suppose a woman of refinement always must begin by liking a man; else it's madness to try and live with him."

Phillips' eyes burned with sudden passion, as she looked up at him. She seemed about to speak again; but suddenly a feeling of lassitude came over her. All she did was give him her hand, in farewell. With intense relief she reached her apartments and locked the door on the outer world.

What was the cause of this exhaustion? She asked herself. Was it the chance encounter with her former husband, while listening to the amorous whispers of another man? She knew she had never been in love with her husband, although at times she had luxuriated in his caresses, as one enjoys a dinner after a fast. She knew that passion with her, whatever it might be with other women, was merely a more or less dainty appetite. She had cared for Don merely as a stepping-stone to other things. Was he now to re-appear as a stumbling-block? No! she felt, as reflection continued, she had slight need to fear on that score; yet his being

in company with the very man Sydney had to meet about business, made her nervous. She became angrily aware that emotions were beginning to play havoc with her face, and that she could not afford the extravagance of any stresses, except such as were sensuously pleasurable.

Had she felt any pity for Don when looking into his eyes across the years of silence? No, she knew she hadn't. But now she began to consider another point. He had certainly changed. He was handsomer than ever, which was queer, considering everything; but what about him had now become so different? She caught her breath—she realized with a start—it was the look of youth that had gone, and that, in going, had so changed the face; the wonderful essence that cannot be described.

Was it due simply to the loss of her? This thought gratified her vanity, but she put it away as being probably outside the pale of likelihood. Was it hard work, or dissipation? The fugitive streaks of silver along his temples had not escaped her ken, when she had shot that swift look at him. And she wondered just now what he had been thinking when he had met her glance.

The time had been so short, so fleet, that she had not been able to analyze his expression any more definitely than she could her own feeling now. She rose impatiently and brought her hand-glass from her dressing table; and with the level afternoon light full upon it she studied her face, anxiously, fearfully. Her mind began to be "borne darkly, fearfully afar"—into the future. That look, that essence—youth—was it still there? Would it stay? Oh! how long would it stay?

With a smile of deep relief she laid the mirror down. So close a simulation of youth was it, anyway, that it would still pass muster, splendidly. Her beauty was

still incomparable. She picked up the mirror once more, and stared greedily. And yet—again that throb of fear, with a new and keener edge to it; this matchless beauty had not yet done for her what she had planned it must. When had she ever been free from that secret haunt of mocking shadow, the proximate menace of poverty? Unwittingly her mind traveled back over the years. She had never swerved from her goal since the day she was counted sixteen; the day she discovered her beauty for herself. She had thought then that it was a magic talisman bound to open soon the door to fame, wealth, power, luxury.

A talisman it had proved. Yes, but even beauty cannot do everything, she had discovered almost at once. Poverty had been her terrible handicap, though she need not have endured that very long, had she been willing to give the price. But she had not been. She had known, even when so young, by a wisdom that seemed uncanny, the physical price she must pay for luxury.

No, no, the goal she had visioned had been so large, so brilliant that she could afford to wait! But, somehow, the road to achievement, through poverty, had proved a long and bitter one. And it was then that she, in a moment of despairing weakness, had married Donald Brush. He had not shown himself over-friendly to her ambitions, and had been unable to gratify her desires for a suitable setting for her beauty.

But she had learned one thing. A married name gave her prestige, status. She had considered the matter quite dispassionately. Don was most unreasonable; he seemed to believe that she, Yotive Soule, should think to some extent of him by way of reciprocity—think of his comfort and happiness. He had been quite absurd and youthful and sentimental about it at first,

and she had inwardly raged at his humdrum stupidity and masculine egotism. So she had come to a stout decision, while Don had been away in Europe, and had told him the very night he had come "home." How tragically he had taken it! She smiled. She never since had heard "La Paloma" without recalling his heroics. And then—she caught her breath, and frowned. Why, he was a sentimental fool, no doubt, but she had not shown cleverness at all. Twice had she made a mistake—twice, and the years going by so swiftly!

She had been deluded, deceived by the man she next had married. He had spent money lavishly on her. She had supposed him rich—had had every reason to do so. Then after three months, he had been killed while riding horseback—and she had discovered, too late, that he had wooed and won her on borrowed money, and that he hadn't left enough to bury himself decently. It had been almost a fatal blow to her, and to her sublime ambition.

A wave of bitterness surged over her, as she recalled error after error in the years that had followed. She had seen women, with beauty not to be compared with hers, reaching the glittering height she dreamed of; and for the thousandth time she tried to analyze the reasons for her failures. Was it that she lacked cleverness, magnetism, imagination?

For the third time she had made a fiasco of her career, for she had finally decided that, if she were ever to realize her dream of bringing kings to their knees, she must be about that regal business mighty soon; and then it was that she had begun to travel the road other outwardly beautiful women have so often traveled and are still traveling—a harder road than to Jordan.

An American dentist at the Bavarian court, whom she had known before his appointment, and whose attentions she had then refused, had renewed his suit, but this time without proposing marriage. In a weak and desperate moment she had accompanied him. For she had felt that, once in Europe, the way would be open. It was he who had first called her a Vampire and finally had flung her off with stinging contumely; and she then had drifted about, finding herself at Algiers once. Finally, when poverty had once more pressed, the chance to visit Minneapolis and pose for a picture had brought her back. The fruit of those years abroad had been many "experiences," bitter and sordid mostly; more or less homage of a crude, ready sort; a few triumphs and just a little celebrity as "an American beauty." Her dream still was a mirage in a desert.

In Minneapolis, Dr. Phillips, physician to the artist she had posed for, had met her by chance. He had fallen a victim at once to her beauty and had proposed marriage. Yetive had realized that he simply worshipped her flesh, but he had attracted her by something besides his exterior comeliness, that she did not quite comprehend, some singular likeness to herself.

She had told him plainly that she had endured enough of poverty and uncertainty; that she would not marry him, or any other man, unless he were very rich; but that if, under those conditions, he cared to dance attendance on her, she had no objection. Her liking for him now came as near being love as it could come, for she had never loved any one but herself; and this fact she was quite frank in understanding, although she had been passionately and emotionally stirred, at times, during some of her "episodes." This creature was greedy of emotion in others, but not in herself. Beguilements, allurements and seductive-ar-

tistic plays at passion and emotion she possessed in ready plenty; but real feeling was to her utterly unknown.

Yevie did not know that, at the time of her meeting with Dr. Phillips, temptation had come to him also in his meeting with the Fitzgeralds. She knew, however, that he had some colossal scheme in hand that might mean wealth, and so inquired no further. For that reason she had kept in touch with him by daily letter, after they had parted and she had gone to New York to pose for *The Vampire*, and later to Boston that she might see for herself its reception by the public.

This picture, it seemed to her, bade fair to do for her what her own efforts had so utterly failed to accomplish—win her fame and fortune. Should Dr. Phillips' plans miscarry, she decided she would immediately send him about his business, if he proved troublesome to her. Possibly, she harbored the thought, he might shoot himself for love of her, and that would surely get into the papers. Famous beauties have been known before to travel over a highway of dead men.

Hours after her musing at the window, and after she had taken her bath, performed the sacred rites of anointing and massaging her body, and, wondering a little at Dr. Phillips' continued absence, had dined, she returned to her room, and was preparing for bed, when the telephone rang. The message was from Sydney. The affair that had brought him to Boston had reached an engrossing stage, said he, and he was therefore unable to see her that night. For three days she had from him only brief messages over the 'phone. But every day she consoled herself by visiting the National Art Exhibit, and gazing on the picture that might spell fame and fortune, even though her liaison with Sydney Phillips should come to naught.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Springing of the Trap

RETURNING in profound perplexity to their quarters, after parting with Don, who went back to the newspaper to "concoct a critical hash," as he called it, Harold found a notification that Dr. Phillips had called him up and left word that he would come about six o'clock. Harold now began to see the mystery dissolving, to some degree. Clearly, the train had made up some lost time; and Sydney, on arrival, finding no one there, had promptly telephoned the apartment-house. Failing to reach Harold thus, he had drifted into the Art Exhibition; and there, doubtless by pure chance, had lighted upon a former friend, Yotive Soule. That the woman happened to be Don's ex-wife was merely coincidence. Hence, although with some curiosity and some alarm, since he knew Yotive's seductive effect on most men, he awaited Sydney's arrival.

At half past five, Sydney came. The meeting was extremely cordial. He explained at once that he had chiefly made the journey in order to superintend an important operation, and added that he sincerely hoped he might incidentally prove of service to Harold in helping to cut the business knot.

"Not getting at once in touch with you," he added, "I casually strolled into the Art Exhibit, and there was pleasantly surprised to meet a former very charming patient." Sydney passed it off without mention of

names, and for the moment Harold forgot how familiarly Yetive had said "Sydney!" The plausible explanation worked like a charm.

Dr. Phillips explained that he had really come a day earlier than the operation was to be done, just to have plenty of opportunity to talk things over with Harold, because he realized what a confounded snag the business appeared to have struck—and he, Sydney, had become anxious. Harold's pleasure at hearing Sydney speak thus was as quickly in evidence as the joy of a child. It seemed so good, anyway, to see Sydney again! In the conference that followed, Harold told him plainly of his growing distrust of Jackberry and Winn; his belief that the deal would fall through; and his determination to reconstruct his plans along different lines. He also announced his intention of returning to Minneapolis with Sydney, in case of any further difficulties. Said he:

"I have made up my mind to set a date for a final conference, a few days from now, when things will have to be definitely settled one way or the other; and I shall write Jackberry this very night, to that effect."

Phillips at once commended the decision, and said he would be unable to see Harold at all the next day, since the operation would require all his attention. But he said that meantime he would arrange by telephone for a conference between Jackberry, Winn, Harold and himself for the day following the morrow, at latest. Perhaps, he hinted, Harold's western way had engendered some stubbornness in the Senator or even in Winn, whom he however considered more plastic in temperament. Just possibly, he, Sydney Phillips, could bring things to a head.

Harold began to feel a bit ashamed of his vexation and impatience, and in the exhilaration of meeting

again such a trusted friend, it seemed now as if everything were going to come out all right, after all. So when Dr. Phillips, at their prolonged dinner, offered a toast to the successful outcome of their conference on the day after tomorrow, Harold drank it with enthusiasm, and filled the glasses again to pledge his dear friend. Just as he had filled them Sydney started up, leaning across the table and looking intently over Harold's right shoulder, apparently at something that caused him unbounded surprise. Harold naturally turned full round with curiosity, and for a second the right hand of Dr. Phillips hovered over Harold's wine-glass.

"What was it?" asked Harold, turning about again. "What startled you so, Sydney? Not the ghost of a patient, I hope?" he added, gaily lifting the glass to his lips. "Here's to your health, dear Sydney!"

Phillips laughed and drank with him, quaffed in concert, saying quite seriously: "I had a glimpse, Harold, of the very strangest face I ever saw—and I'm trying to remember, now, where I've seen it before. For the moment it quite unnerved me. I think I'll drink another glass of wine—what capital claret this is! Old Sir Randal Roberts, of sainted Bohemian memory, used to say there were only four wines fit for a gentleman of lineage and fine taste to drink—claret, burgundy, madeira and champagne. At our next dinner we must try some madeira, if you will. Fine and fit as the others may be, I like that best."

The next day, Wednesday, Phillips, Jackberry and Winn met—not in Jackberry's or Winn's office, but in the most private room of a suburban hotel at which each had arrived by a different route.

They had not seen each other for nearly a dozen years, yet they might have neighbored for a lifetime,

so thoroughly did all seem to be in accord of purpose. Still, in the beginning of the interview, Winn showed considerable nervousness and interposed tentative objections. Jackberry and Phillips, from beginning to end, were coldly methodical. At ten they met; at one their plans had been perfected.

Phillips, after a few moments of beating about the bush, explained that Harold and he had drunk some toasts the night before, and that Harold's glass had contained a globule whose first effect would be to give him uneasy sleep and make him wake up headachy, stupid, and vague and rambling in his talk. This, the physician said, would last, so far as the intense headache was concerned, for thirty-six to forty-eight hours, and give him a chance as a friendly physician, when he should find Harold the following morning in wretched condition, to prescribe another drug which would serve their every purpose.

Then, on Thursday, if everything went on schedule, a private hearing before the probate judge could be arranged. That part of it must be left to Jackberry. The Senator gave prompt assent. Winn, who would have been as big a villain as either of the others, if he hadn't been so cowardly, assured them (though he looked pallid and glanced over his shoulder when he said it) that his brother, Dr. Martin L. Winn, would lend his aid. He would make the—er—necessary—ah—arrangements, for Harold's reception into Allandale Asylum. The matter could undoubtedly be put through by Thursday night without the least trouble or anxiety. This last assertion was made by Jackberry, and he suggested that everyone had better bestir himself, as there were many details still to be arranged, and in a matter so—well—professionally delicate—you know, there must be no hitch.

"There'll be none to my part of it, by God!" he boasted.

The conference closed with the understanding that the supposed business meeting on which Harold was counting was to take place in Jackberry's office as usual; and that, after a few protests and objections, Harold was apparently to have everything his own way, as to the stipulations and signing of the papers. Every major concession was to be yielded; and apparent duplicates of what he first read and signed would be signed by him. It would then be proposed that they all go to a notary, or Master in Chancery, for the signing and putting on record of the final agreements. Instead, they would in reality go to Judge Chambers' office, where the private hearing would have already been arranged to take place.

Inasmuch as Harold was to be under the influence of a powerful drug, the final agreement to be signed would be a fantastic thing so worded as to appear a legal matter, but actually the ramblings of an unbalanced mind. After they had drawn him out to talk foolishly before the Judge, the word of the two physicians, the lawyer and a reputable retired merchant and philanthropist like Winn, would be more than enough to commit Harold, as a person palpably demented, whose friends were alarmed over his condition.

Harold's hapless fate thus was settled as if he were a pawn on a chessboard. At that very hour he had just awakened out of a sleep oppressed with horrors. He called for Don, but Don was not there. When he finally had bathed and succeeded in dressing himself he felt unaccountably ill and curiously disinclined for effort of any kind. All the momentary enthusiasm of the night before he recalled with a dull wonder that

he could have been so optimistic. In fact, he remembered things only with an effort. His temples throbbed; his hands felt cold and sweaty. As in a dream he wondered for a time where Don was; and the next moment, dream-like, it didn't seem to matter. But why hadn't Sydney come, or telephoned? Sydney could give him something at once to put him right. Sydney? Heavens! Was it possible that he now lay in the snares of Yotive Soule? He seemed to remember that her image had flitted like a flame through the many horrors of his nightmare. This image persisted curiously, and in the same curious way his brain insisted that it must have been the claret of the night before that had made him sick, and that he abhorred claret. Yet, the next second, it seemed as if some iced claret would relieve him at once. He would have gone out to get it, but he felt too languid to stir, too languid even to telephone the janitor's office. He would lie down again and try to sleep it off.

After what seemed hours of nausea and throbbing temples, Dr. Phillips came in. Harold's condition evoked his instant sympathy, and eagerly Harold took the draught the physician prepared for him. Harold experienced almost immediate relief; but his languor continued, until Sydney suggested that he should come over to Sydney's hotel for the night, for treatment if necessary. He assented, and slept that night under the spell of another drug. The next morning he felt better, and Sydney prescribed just one more draught for him before breakfast, if he felt like trying to do any business that day. He took this. A feeling of buoyancy and singular vigor came to him, and his optimism, his confidence in himself, was fully restored.

Phillips then confided that he had found time to

arrange for the conference, and had also talked with Jackberry and Winn a little, and that he believed they were weakening.

"If you stand firm, old man," he concluded, "I think they will concede every point demanded."

It happened exactly as Dr. Phillips had predicted. During the interview it seemed to Harold as if his brain had never worked more clearly. Everything went smoothly. True, Jackberry clung to one or two points rather stubbornly for a time, but Winn began urging concessions while the conference was yet young.

Presently Harold knew that he had won. A feeling of success had been buoying him up with every passing moment. His own eloquence amazed him. He even wanted to prolong the controversy for the joy of overcoming obstacles, so sure was he of ultimate victory. And then it came, all in a moment. His pulses beat furiously. Quite dazzled by his dreams, as he saw what a golden future stretched before him, he seemed to be walking on air, when they all adjourned to the notary's office for the signing and recording of the final documents.

Harold here found himself being annoyed by the notary, who was a Judge Chambers, it appeared. This judge asked a good many questions that surprised Harold, and Harold answered them, as he fancied, rather spiritedly. After a while a Dr. Winn came in. Harold then said to himself that it certainly was absurd of him not to recall that Winn was a doctor, or no—whatever could be the matter with him?—Winn wasn't a doctor, certainly not, he was an expert philanthropist. Well, who then was this?

What on earth made his head feel so queer? A moment later he knew that he was heartily shaking

hands with Jackberry and Winn. He saw them leave the office, with an odd feeling of relief. They asked him to excuse them, as there were some important details of this enterprise to be attended to at once. Harold nodded. He saw that he was expected to know all about these; but, somehow, he could not recall that any previous reference had been made to them.

Later, he and the two physicians (he had stopped trying to puzzle out about Dr. Winn) entered an automobile, and he leaned against the cushions rather wearily. Things now seemed foggy in his memory. He was desperately ashamed that he had forgotten just what business it was that called them to this big, gray stone building. So he cunningly said nothing. And for the same reason he waited quietly in the room where he found himself, after a rather long ride. He would not, for anything, confess to Dr. Phillips that he had forgotten what he was to wait for, when the latter said significantly: "I'll call for you here, as soon as I attend to that little matter you and I talked over, day before yesterday."

Stupor now overcame him. Two hours later he realized that he was sitting in a big easy-chair. In front of him was a barred window. He did not notice the bars till he staggeringly approached them. His eye caught a gleam of scarlet out there on the lawn. A vague memory stirred him. For a half hour longer he struggled to recall that buried memory; and then swiftly, in agony, the resurrection was accomplished. Harold remembered and knew!

He had passed the place when motoring with Miss Winn; and, struck by the beauty of the scarlet flowers on the lawn, had asked her whether it was a college of some sort. She had answered, as the poor, ignorant, cultured girl honestly believed: "It's a place,

Mr. Fitzgerald, where they try to cure diseased minds. But the grounds are beautiful, aren't they, although the associations are so dreadful? It's Allandale Asylum."

"The place looks very lovely," Harold had musingly replied. "Perhaps the poor creatures there are better off than many engaged in the struggle for daily bread, with no beautiful gardens to look at or move about in. That lawn, most certainly, is a landscape dream. I shall never forget that blaze of blood-red flowers. It's like a symbol of the Brotherhood of Man."

Harold was looking at it now from the inside; the only way things must be looked at to be truly understood. And on the outside, Senator Jacob Jackberry, Calvin Alvin Winn and Sydney Phillips, M. D., were rapidly forming, in most amiable fashion, the Neo-Geo Company, for the astonishment of the financial and industrial world.

CHAPTER XIX

Don's Big Assignment

ONE late afternoon of exhilarant, opal October, some months after Harold had regained full possession of his mind only to find himself an inmate of Allendale Asylum, Dr. George B. Clark sat in the consulting room of the Metropolitan Hospital. The last patient had been treated; and with a sigh of satisfaction the Doctor was reflecting that he could leave early and have a chance to play a game of billiards on his way home. Billiards were his pet weakness.

Dr. George rose from his chair and was putting on his hat, when the door of the consulting room opened, and a most abominably desolate-looking creature entered.

The Doctor's first thought, as he glanced at this wreck, was that his billiard game was off. He stared in silence a moment at the caricature, the hideous gargoye of a man. The fellow's face was haggard and gray, his hair all tumbled awry, and his whole body shaking as with palsy. With all the other marks of soddenness, it was difficult even for Dr. George to recognize the usually immaculate Don Brush.

"Well!" said Dr. George somewhat curtly, at length.

"I've fallen again," faltered the other, as briefly. Then after a moment, he seemed, by a huge effort, to gather himself up.

"For God's sake, Doctor, don't be too hard on me *now!*" he cried. "You never have been, of course, and 'twould serve me right, if you should refuse to help me. I don't blame you for looking disgusted. I'm down and out again—all in! But, so help me God! if you'll pull me up just once more, I'll make the race of my life. You know how I've tried! I'm no dipsomaniac. If I were, I'd end it all tonight! I'm an inebriate though, I suppose, but these—lapses——" he hesitated for the word just a second—"are getting fewer; they do me up more quickly every time. I think you've cured me——" he stretched forth his hands whose veins were congested purple—"of drunkenness at least six times already, and last time you got me a job, in addition. I made good at it, too, you know, till—oh, Hell! What's the use of apologies? Look at me!" He stopped, shuddering, "This is the last time. By God, it's the last!"

His tone was infinitely weary now, and something in it made Dr. Clark look at him sharply. Then he said in a practical, matter-of-fact tone:

"You can beat the booze, yet, Don, if you'll do as I tell you. Intemperance, alcoholism, is a social disease of the body politic. It's a symptom rather than a cause, and you know that when treating the disease, I let the symptoms take care of themselves. I need your help in a matter of importance. Can you brace up within a fortnight? Ten days would suit me better."

Through the muck and mire that weeks of debauchery had left upon him, Don lifted a face transfigured by hope, and by the suggestion of being useful to the man who had so often and so eagerly helped *him*.

"Can I? Just try me!" he cried,

Dr. George looked him over a moment very critically.

"I'll begin with the stuff I used before," said he, "but I'll vary it slightly so it shan't seem like the same old story." He smiled gently on the culprit, and added: "I'll call a nurse, right away."

A moment later he was quietly, almost absent-mindedly saying:

"I'm turning Mr. Brush over to your care once more, Miss Logan, and I want you to set him up on his feet like a man, as soon as possible, for I need him in my business. Burn all his clothes in the large furnace. Have Nelson give him a very hot bath and then put him in the medical ward and treat him to a hypodermic. Repeat in half an hour, if the stomach fails to respond. That's better than washing it out, as the vomiting rouses the solar plexus centres. Put an ice bag to his head and a hot water bag to his feet. Give him one-thirtieth of a grain of strychnine every three hours till morning, and let him have all the hot, salted milk he will drink, with fifteen drops of capsicum in each glass. If he begs for liquor, limit him to three pint bottles of Bass's Ale each day,—ale that has been long in the ice-box. You may give him a fourth, if you think best, but don't give it to him till you think the milk is fairly well digested. No morphine, bromides or chloral! If he wants more drink, whisper to him that famous advice of John L.—'Stay in bed and suffer!' Don't forget the usual dose of calomel!"

Don smiled a feeble smile at this, and Miss Logan looked very decorously amused.

"He has wonderful recuperative powers," continued Dr. Clark, musingly, "as wonderful as ever came to my notice. Nature means well by him, if he'll only

give her a fair chance. In three or four days he very likely will demand his clothes. Tell him where his new ones are, and that he may have them, if he cares to go after them." The doctor was now grumbling and talking in an aside, exactly as if Don had not been present.

"That man is one of the most reliable newspaper men in the country, when sober," said he. "Given a proper environment, he would be a credit, and has been, to journalism. Well, give him no medicine after the third or fourth day, nurse, only nourishment. At the end of several days you may supplement the treatment with electro-therapeutics. Don't forget to remind me to look at him in the morning. His being in the medical ward, not the surgical, might possibly make me forget him, till late in the day. And when he awakes, by the way, keep his mind agreeably occupied." Dr. George left the room chuckling.

Then the nurse at once took Don in hand, professionally, with a kind earnestness, that at once had a soothing effect on him.

"Dr. George thinks a heap of you, I know!" she murmured.

Two weeks later Don Brush seemed to himself a creature born anew. Were it not for corroding memories, he could almost have been happy. As it was, he seemed to be physically and therefore morally quickened. He felt once more that elemental zest each one should feel in merely being alive.

With a keen expectancy now, he awaited Dr. George's commission; and three days after the fortnight had expired, he found himself engaged as an attendant at Allandale Asylum, in a ward of violently insane patients.

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This commission from Dr. Clark aroused no astonishment in him. His training as a newspaper man had steeled him against surprises. His natural sangfroid contributed to the effect.

Dr. Clark's crusade against prison conditions and a dozen other evils had too long been the subject of front-page headlines for Don to be unfamiliar with the Doctor's methods, and he had been of some service to the distinguished surgeon several times before in enterprises of similar trend. As to Allandale Asylum, there had been myriad hoarse whispers for a long time; but invariably they had eased away, and whatever foul mysteries lurked concealed behind that fair exterior, had remained mysteries unrevealed. Now, apparently to Don, it was intended that his hand should tear aside the veils and exhibit whatever pestilent things had been spawning there. But deep down in his heart, Don doubted whether even his own clever wits could avail against a system of intricate connivance, a conspiracy of silence, that had so far baffled every attempt to find out what was really happening inside the esthetic-looking walls of Allandale.

On his way thither, he recalled a day when he and Harold had passed a similar institution near Boston, almost equally inviting to the casual eye, and the remark that Harold had made: "If one were so unfortunate as to be mentally unbalanced, there might be worse fates than being shut up in so beautiful a dungeon!" He recalled Harold's look of distress, when he had torn away the veil of illusion by saying bluntly it was known that "hellish things go on there, and in all such places."

At resurrection of these and older memories, Don fell into a mood of deep despond that seemed to be gnawing away, morsel by morsel, his very soul.

"Where, in God's name," he asked himself the thousandth time, "is Harold?" He felt as if his friend had been obliterated from the face of the earth. That memorable Tuesday in June—how long ago it seemed, and through what travail of spirit had he passed in that short interval! There had been that second meeting with his former wife. They had looked each other squarely in the face, a moment; then, before Don's brain had barely registered the fact, she had passed on, unfathomable. And in him emotions had been called into play to which he had long been a stranger. That soulless woman had always wielded power to shake him to the centres of his being. Must it be always thus? His reason rejected her; his heart denied her. He was convinced that any semblance of love had long since vanished out of his heart, as though it had never been; and yet her physical presence could waken an indescribable emotional disturbance, let his reason protest as it might. Even the mere glimpse of her at the Art Exhibit, had been enough to rouse a demon in him, and start him downhill again.

He had never been conscious of exactly what had happened after that brief meeting. He did remember distinctly that he and Harold had beaten a retreat to the street, and that Yetive had been in company with a tall, professional-looking man—Dr. Phillips, so Harold had said. He also recalled Harold's perturbation at discovering his friend, Sydney, on familiar terms with the Vampire. All, after that, was confusing and bewildering. For night after night, day after day, Don had immersed himself in the lethal river of alcohol. First he had turned in his copy to the *Star*, and then had gone straight to the nearest saloon. Where he had been sleeping the horrible,

hideous, dream-haunted sleeps of complete intoxication, he could not remember.

Two weeks later he had partially come to himself in a mean lodging, and with physical nausea and profound soul-sickness had begun to pick up the threads of life once more. He was out of a job and without money, except a dollar bill tucked in the foot of a stocking he had not taken off for days. When he had summoned up nerve to call on the manager of the *Star*, the manager had told him curtly, though without unkindness, that his usefulness, even as a "hack," was too much impaired for them to take him on again. The manager had offered him a small stake to get cleaned up, if he would promise, on his honor, not to spend it for more booze, instead; but Don had declined with thanks, rather resentfully, it must be confessed, and the interview had ended. Most of all, Harold had vanished from their quarters, and had left no trace. The rent had been paid in advance, and his effects were at his disposal, or could be stored for him.

The management of the apartment, in reply to his insistent queries, believed that Mr. Fitzgerald had left the place on Wednesday evening, the day after the encounter at the Art Exhibit; but a note from him had come on Friday, ordering his effects and all mail delivered to his attorney, the Hon. Jacob Jackberry. The note said he had been taken suddenly ill and was going to his home in Minneapolis, accompanied by his physician. Oh, certainly, they were perfectly familiar with Mr. Fitzgerald's signature; they had cashed cheques for him several times. The note was dictated and typewritten, but signed by Mr. Fitzgerald, beyond a doubt.

This was absolutely all Don could learn of his

dearly loved chum.

Humiliated and beyond words dejected by his own disgraceful lapse, Don wondered whether Harold might not have wished to sever the ties of friendship between them. His affection gainsaid this thought, but his reason inclined him to it. Yet he made several more efforts. He sought out Senator Jackberry, whom he had casually met some years before. He was, in spite of his dissipated appearance, rather cordially received by the lawyer, though Jackberry seemed at first to recall Harold and his affairs with some difficulty or unpleasant reluctance, which made Don surmise that the deal had fallen through, or was at indefinite stand-still, and that Jackberry was vexed over loss of time and effort. But presently the bluff Senator said, in such an off-hand way, that it made Don's heart welter in sick despair:

"Oh, yes, yes. The people at his former quarters informed you correctly—quite correctly. Mr. Fitzgerald was threatened with typhoid, and returned home with his physician. Yes, he decided to go home quite suddenly, I remember. Some business matter in Minneapolis needed his presence there, I believe, and he didn't want to risk being ill in Boston for an indefinite time. He had gone to the train to see his dear friend, Dr. Phillips, off, when he was taken quite ill; hadn't been feeling any too well for a week.

"Dr. Phillips decided to stay over till a later train, and Mr. Fitzgerald was made comfortable at a hotel opposite the South Station until he could be made ready to go. The temporary prostration eased up a bit, and he came here to dictate a letter. The two got away on the Western Limited some hours later. I had one of my clerks send his effects after him, and in about a fortnight, it seems to me, he and Dr. Phil-

lips left for Europe. That's the last news I've had of them, for I got merely a wire; so I can't give you Mr. Fitzgerald's address until I hear from him again."

In the weeks that followed, while Don still had been pursuing his downward spiral, he ventured three times to ask for Harold's address. The first time, "Poste Restante," Hyères, France, was given him. The second time, he was rather coldly received and the same address was repeated. The third time, Senator Jackberry was "out." Don could only arrive at the decision that Harold had become disgusted with him and his weakness, and had given orders that his address was not to be revealed. A letter sent to Hyères had been returned; and one written to Minneapolis—the complete address there he didn't know—had met the same fate; also, one aimed in similar darkness at Dr. Phillips, begging him to ask Harold not to judge too harshly, and to drop a line of friendly forgiveness and encouragement.

It was a stunning blow to Don, for the young man of heart and genius had thoroughly awakened the affections of his experienced, cynical elder. Before long, too, Don had begun to feel he had perhaps deserted, or seemed to desert, Harold at a critical time in Harold's own affairs. He wondered how the invention was prospering, and very sadly whether the boy's brilliant dream of sudden wealth and power for good had gone glimmering, as his own smaller dreams had gone, so many, many times.

Grateful to Dr. Clark, and vitally bound to show his gratitude in action, Don had arrived at Allandale.

He had counted on perhaps a little difficulty in passing the superintendent's office. He was a shade nervous lest his recommendations be investigated too

closely, but he needed not have been. Superintendent Wilson accepted him with but a bare reference to the point of previous experience. A wiry tenacity was suggested in Don's physique, and the superintendent had begun by looking him over critically, which examination had quickly induced approval.

Just as Dr. Clark had remarked, Don had wonderful recuperative powers. This physical reserve force, he now reflected, appeared to overbalance any lack of training on his part, in the eyes of the head official. He found himself engaged and turned over to the head deputy, a Mr. Spear, for instructions in his duties.

The latter had held this position for years. He was a tall man with what is known as a sugar-loaf head, a shape not incompatible with great intellectual powers (as witness the skull of "the magician of the North," Sir Walter Scott), but more particularly indicative of unusual physical strength. It meant this, in his case, eminently fitting him to his job. He had muscles like steel springs, and arms of such abnormal reach that they suggested an ape's when hanging in repose—"a reg'lar go-rillar" one admiring attendant styled him.

Don, the cynical reporter, whom Harold had jokingly rallied as being too top-heavy with experience to be astonished at anything, whistled a critical "Whew!" to himself, when his interview with Spear was at an end. For his instruction as to the scientific treatment necessary for diseased minds had lasted just fifteen minutes. Now, supposedly, he was well qualified to hold such a responsible and trying position.

An hour or so later, in crossing the corridor that led to the wing of the female patients' quarters, Don

saw a tall, strikingly handsome woman going down an intersecting passage. Her presence stirred him strangely. For an hour or more he continued to think of her, very naturally contrasting her with the sinuous, colorful, sensuous Vampire of his years of damnation. This new, half-glimpsed woman looked and moved like a real woman, not a make-believe. Nor did she suffer in comparison, physically, with Yotive Soule. Not alone by her noble proportions was the eye satisfied and comforted. Shapely-shouldered, full-breasted, nobly hipped, and with a walk whose unconscious dignity any queen might have envied, this mysterious invader of Don's musings had a face of wonderful compassion—a face which recalled that of the Human-Divine mother of the First Great Socialist.

But the Madonna look of peace we always associate with that Oriental Virgin was not there; was pathetically lacking. Instead, although Don had not fully seen her eyes, he had sensed a feeling that they hinted of latent fire, of a flame turned inward on a spirit which had either seen or had experienced much of suffering. This, despite the fact that the long Madonna oval of the countenance and the clear complexion, framed in an abundant darkness of clustered hair—glory of woman, eternal snare of man—had given at first an impression of placidity, of high serenity and superb womanly poise. Ay, poise was there, but not perfected peace.

This woman had suffered, had a heart, a history; had trampled her suffering under foot; had risen far above herself, and gone gallantly her way, gone about her tender, helpful business, on this dark planet of sinning, suffering, sorrowing men. She had conquered, but was not yet calm after the victory.

Thus Don thought of her. "She looks distinctly

eugenic," said he, "attractively wholesome!" Then he smiled to himself, this time *at* himself, for such persistence in thinking of her at all. He, the harshly experienced, the cynical, the woman-suspicious, devoting so much thought to an utter stranger, casually met—a nurse in a lunatic asylum? It was a bit absurd, was it not?

But she did carry herself gloriously! Who could gainsay that fact? And without resistance she bore Don's thought away to the point of hoping he might once more behold her, or perhaps might make her acquaintance, even against the regulations of the establishment.

He had to laugh at himself, now. Was he indeed so hungry for companionship that he craved acquaintance with an Allandale nurse? Yet she certainly looked more than her present seeming—a high, heroic figure of womanhood. Don was thinking all round the woman, in a profoundly serious way. And while thus reflecting, a fresh impetus of energy for his task in behalf of Dr. Clark came to him.

"I owe all this to you," was his ultimate mental comment. "To you, oh mystery in woman's form!"

CHAPTER XX

First Lessons in Brutality

HABITUAL inclination to cynicism does not necessarily spring from melancholy, or bring melancholy on. Some cynics are in reality extremely cheerful persons. Yet it was a mood very much akin to melancholy that took grim hold on Don after his interview with Spear. Through the screen doors at either end of the wide corridors some of the hardier flowers for which Allandale was famous still bloomed in brilliant bravery; and some of the delicious fragrance of the thousands of roses that had vanished, mingling with far-away odors of maturescent wild-grapes borne by a crisp gay gale, seemed still to linger, still to proclaim that summer even now continued to penetrate the very quadrangle of the asylum itself. The sunshine made bright patches on polished floors. Everything most cunningly conspired to suggest the peace, the beauty, the cheerfulness that were not.

As Don was to go on duty within an hour, he proceeded to utilize that hour in digesting the information just given him.

"First of all," Spear had said, "you must show these paupers your authority. Impress upon them the fact that you are their master. Don't bother to explain anything. Pay no attention, when some of them get after you to appeal for their discharge. They cuddle to a new nurse, right away, in the hope that

he'll write to their relatives or friends. By tomorrow the whole ward will know there's a new attendant, and they'll size you up. It will depend on your looks whether or not they'll bring their complaints to you against me and the nurses. This is new business to you, and it's easy to feel a new attendant.

"Now, then"—impressively, "you're to take down the names of all who make complaints. Promise them that you will take their grievances to the superintendent and trustees. Promise anything—anything within *reason*, you know."

Spear grinned, his thin lips parting to show long, narrow, yellow teeth.

"Draw them out all you can. They'll give you the names of nurses who have beaten them——"

"Oh, do you beat them here?" Don was keen enough to ask indifferently.

"Certainly, we have to! Pure case of self-defense. You'll find it so."

"But I thought attacks on attendants were very rare," said Don, quite with the air of one caring more for the argument than the matter involved. "Wilson said so."

"Oh, he's dead right, as to that," answered Spear. "Only one or two in a hundred are really dangerous. But if we didn't give them a good thrashing just so often, we couldn't get any work out of them. You see, after you get onto the game, you can loaf and let *them* do most of the work. The hours are long, altogether too long for the attendants, but I'll put you wise to the good workers in your ward, and you can get a snooze every afternoon. The place would be a snap, if the wages were higher; but you can generally fool relatives and friends and pick up fifteen or twenty dollars a month extra. It's like finding it.

Some are easy marks, particularly the women with husbands who have gone insane through booze. These cases generally get well in six months, but if we find we have a good piece of graft, we take mighty good care that they stay longer. The doctors rely on us, of course, for reports of the patients' conditions. Some of the patients we keep for years.

"What's that? Oh! yes, a few escape, but the beauty of it is that no one believes what they say. Most people think they're nutty, and back they come to the asylum. You're onto the game, I see. If we didn't keep the asylum full, there'd be fewer doctors and nurses required, and some of us would lose our jobs. The superintendent——" Spear looked contemptuous, "is nothing but a big stiff, a figure-head. He comes around once a week; spends about two minutes with a patient; looks wiser than a boiled owl; gives them a jolly—and so it goes, year in and year out. Some of the relatives occasionally demand the discharge of a patient, and once in a great while we release them on parole. After their discharge they're too damned afraid to make a holler against us, for fear we'll get 'em back and do 'em up proper.

"Now, then," Spear continued, "you get chummy with them all, and report to me. I bet you'll have the names of all the chronic kickers, and you can watch Fales and Goddard polish 'em up later. Of course, you know jiu-jitsu? Yes? That's good. We'll show you the pumping process some night. You're just built for this business—you're wiry! I don't believe you'll be long in catching on. Say, there's one son-of-a-gun in this ward who got back his reason over a year ago, and ever since then he's been making complaints against us. It takes four of us to handle him. The last time we fixed him so he was in bed for a month.

He's a good worker, all right, but he's forever complaining, and when you're disciplining the ward, he always butts in. But you look all right and I think you'll do. I'm glad you've come. Report progress to me tomorrow night."

"Don't the doctors ever catch you when you're—er—polishing 'em up?" Don inquired with so much interest that Spear smiled amiably.

"Oh, we have sentries out," he answered. "We've got it down to a science. If a report *does* get to them, we say that so-and-so got fighting with a patient, and we had to jump in and then protect ourselves. See? I'm itching to get at Hicks, that's the obstreperous cuss's name—and say, if I ever do, by God, he'll go to the morgue and to the medical school for carving afterward!

"By the way," he added, "the grub here is fierce, except the days that visitors from the Board are expected, but we stand in with the administration, about a dozen of us. We've been here for years and so we get better eats than the rest of the nurses. Just see that you stand in with me and the bunch, and you won't be sorry.

"Some of these nights I'll give you an illustration how we handle state paupers. Hicks calls this place a slaughter-house—well——" Spear seemed to be struggling with internal mirth—"well, he'll have one fine chance, sooner or later, to think it is, when his eyes bulge and his face turns black. When he feels my knees on his breast-bone, Big Dick on his belly and Black Jack's claws around his throat, he'll give worlds for a breath of air. You bet, we'll squeeze the last breath out of him!

"You know, they occasionally hold an autopsy here, but they chiefly depend upon the report of the nurse.

So long—for an hour—then I'll introduce you to your ward. And say, any time you want a high-ball, I'll put you wise. Only go easy on it, easy's the word, here."

Don could hardly refrain from leaping at this monster and crushing out his bestial life. But there was too much at stake. He must smother his fierce resentment and patiently bide his time. Dr. Clark was working out this problem, and was depending upon the reporter for information vitally necessary to complete his proofs.

Don wondered now, as he sat under a tree on the magnificent lawn, waiting for the hour when he must report for duty, why new attendants always began their training in the violent wards. He had been so informed in the recent interview.

Later, in his uniform of white duck, with Spear, he entered Ward E.

Brush had gone through many and strange experiences, but his blood chilled a little at this, his first intimate acquaintance with that most uncanny of mysteries, disordered mentality. His first impression was one of surprise that this should be called the violent ward. He counted twenty-six patients, of whom eighteen appeared palpably insane and in clear need of restraint. The others looked only melancholy and crushed, sitting gloomily in their chairs or walking aimlessly about the ward.

Don was evidently a surprise to them, and he could see the electric intelligence flashed around that he was to be their new attendant. From that instant those who seemed sane began to watch his every movement, and even, more or less timidly, walked closer to obtain a better view. Some nodded and smiled and even extended their hands and greeted him pleasantly.

Hicks—he had been pointed out to Don by Spear with a significant nod—was more reserved, and was the last to greet the new nurse. He had taken plenty of time to size Don up, and compare him with his predecessors.

Spear now took Don to each patient, explaining the form of malady with which he was afflicted. He showed him the record-book and how to keep it, and told him the size of the doses of chloral, morphine and bromides to administer.

To illustrate to Don, he mixed a quarter of a grain of morphine in water, drew it into the barrel of a hypodermic syringe, and without ceremony or antiseptic precautions rolled up the sleeve of the nearest patient—who to all intents and purposes did not require morphine any more than did the nurse—jabbed the needle into the upper, outer side of the arm and injected its contents. Before Spear left the ward, the patient was heavily sleeping. The after-effects of the deadly drug might last from forty to seventy-two hours. To Don, who knew something of its hypnotic action, its injection seemed an act of wanton cruelty. But Spear was quite unaware of having done anything except in the line of instruction for the benefit of a new nurse. Don knew enough of medicine to realize that had this patient been a victim of kidney disease, that injection of morphine would in all probability have proved fatal.

Yet Spear had seen the man grow drowsy, drop into a chair and become oblivious of surroundings, and he had only grinned and with a word or two more to Don had gone off about other "business."

Don's heart contracted, as he looked at the helpless victim. This was a "state charge" merely, a pauper, a physical wreck who had fallen into the sq-

cial abyss, and was now, in consequence, consigned to a living death. And then shudderingly, Don recalled what Spear had said about the morgue.

So that was it. When finally soul and body had parted company, this man, made in the image of his Maker, according to a certain book in which many Americans yet profess to believe, would be carted off to the dissecting-table without even a *Requiescat in Pace*; and when the anatomists with their pupils were done with him, he shoveled like a shard into Potter's Field.

CHAPTER XXI

Barbara Avery Learns

IT was Barbara's hour off duty. An arrangement had been made which broke the long day agreeably and gave her from three to four in the afternoon. Under a beautiful, thick-leaved maple in the remotest corner of the spacious grounds, Barbara was trying to immerse herself in a book. She had brought it in the hope of ridding herself of her own persistent thoughts; but finding concentration impossible, she laid it down.

Amid the clumps of trees, not very far off, a dozen or more patients with a couple of attendants were taking a stroll. She watched them, reflecting with bitter-tinged wonder what a marvelous adjuster of things is habit. This was the first week of June and she had been a nurse at Allandale since October. It almost seemed as if she had known no other life. Day followed day, like shadows, in dull monotony. Hour after hour she had gone through the routine, until memory finally had been forced to lose its keenness, and a sort of apathy had closed upon her.

She wondered whether this listlessness were better for her than the fierce hate and anger that had once made her quiver and had kept her filled with energy. At least, she had then been intensely alive; now she seemed half dead. Would she ever feel all-alive again? Well, there was nothing to do but wait; and she recollected to have read at the close of a wonderful book

by a wonderful Frenchman, that "the sum of all human philosophy is contained in two words: Wait and Hope!"

The memory had struck deeper and more painful root into the core of her, because she had at last awakened to the fact that she had never truly and thoroughly loved her seducer. Had she loved, it would have been some excuse; to her own soul, at least. That soul now revolted at any least recollection of his look, his voice, his touch. Oh! it was horrible! Her punishment was too severe even for the purification of a soul, she sometimes felt. Her mind had not yet expanded into the knowledge that this punishment of burning shame is merely a product of man-established conventions in morally dark ages.

Barbara had never pondered much about love till after she had discovered that she did not love Sydney Phillips, but loathed him as a bad habit which had grown upon her and the yielding to which her awakened soul abhorred. That kind of passion which had arisen between them is close to loathing and to hate at all times. That she had wanted, and expected, to hate her betrayer, she had at first assured herself. But the words of the dying Agatha had impressed her mind cumulatively:

"You will be a good woman, Barbara, for you will never see him again—and some day you will more than forgive him: you will utterly forget him. For he isn't real, Barbara; he's only a hideous dream—a hideous morphine-dream!"

Barbara, when she left him, had been electrified at first by the discovery of herself—the finding of her soul. She burned to be doing something. There must be work for her—a place for her, of some kind, in the world, she knew; for she meant to make it. She was

bound hereafter to gain her own respect. But it is true that she felt occasionally some savage tingles of temptation, some fancies that an hour might arrive when she might have revenge.

Barbara had never read much of Byron; but a few words from one of his poems had somehow stuck in her memory:

“There never yet was human power,
Which could escape, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.”

Yet, even while this thought was echoing in her memory, there dawned upon her, dimly at first, and then luminously, the truth that a wrong is not a thing to be treasured; that it proves a continuous curse to him who seeks to treasure it, a spurious treasure, the gloating over which corrupts and corrodes the moral nature like a vice; and that it is really close to a crime to cultivate hate toward any individual in a world that so greatly needs love.

Barbara was just beginning acquisition of those jewels that adorn a woman best—pure thoughts and loving kindness. Her first month in Boston had been successful, insofar as finding a position spells success. This work was in what is locally known as “The Floating Hospital.” The following month, through a chance introduction on one of her “days off,” she had been engaged as a nurse by a State Orphanage.

Fairly familiar though she had been with the intimate régime of hospitals and state institutions, she saw things, that month, which pulled hard at her heart-strings and lessened the frequency of her moods of apathy.

Almost at the moment of her entrance into the State

Orphanage, her notice had been attracted to a strikingly pretty girl of fifteen, who reminded her somewhat of herself when she had entered the employ of Sydney Phillips.

The girl's name was Eloise Barton. Barbara even learned her history, not from her own lips, but from Orphanage gossip.

The father of Eloise had been a Nova Scotia sailor, and then a shipwright. He and his wife had kept a prosperous inn near Boston, some years later. But the sea had "called again," as it so often does men who have followed it; and in spite of entreaties the father had gone forth and had returned no more. The mother had struggled along, but misfortunes had heaped themselves upon her. She finally had died of malignant diphtheria, and the dainty child of three had become a State-charge. The child remembered nothing. All she knew of herself she had heard from others. At sixteen she was to be released from the institution, and enter the world. To this, of course, any girl or boy would look forward with eagerness. Eloise was an Amazon in strength, just as Barbara had been, and unusually pretty, aglow with health and vibrant vitality. She looked eighteen, so opulent was her figure. Probably it was Barbara's panged memory of her own luckless entrance into Dr. Phillips' hospital in those years now growing into vague and vaguer shadows, that made her over-acute to observe (though it was obvious enough) that Eloise attracted the attention of the physicians, and that the girl's brown eyes grew warmer and her very lips trembled at the approach of Dr. Fowler. Fowler was young and good-looking—a new man on the medical staff of the hospital wing, and not yet in general practice outside.

Barbara noted this with heavy foreboding, for she knew every throb of the heart of Eloise. She had read the luminous language of those warm, brown eyes, and dreaded the pitfalls that awaited. Twice Barbara saw Dr. Fowler go out of his way to speak in a low tone to Eloise; and finally she learned, through gossip, that Dr. Fowler had once been reprimanded for "indiscretion."

In the third week of her stay, Dr. Fowler's vacation-time occurred. He was to be absent two weeks, and was on his final visit before leaving. Barbara had accidentally come upon Eloise, sobbing her heart out that morning; and at noon Eloise was nowhere to be seen. Apprehensive, and with strange, new feelings of militant compassion, Barbara searched hastily through the garden for the girl. She wanted to prevent Dr. Fowler from seeing Eloise before he went away; but she had not been quick enough. They stood behind the "Big Tree," as it was called; and were, as they supposed, securely screened from observation. They did not hear Barbara coming over the soft grass, nor did Barbara see Dr. Boylan, the Superintendent, trailing cautiously behind herself.

Eloise had her arms around Dr. Fowler's neck and was passionately sobbing on his breast.

"How can I ever bear to have you gone for two whole weeks?" she was crying incoherently; but, before the physician could answer, the Superintendent had slipped ahead of Barbara and stepped around the tree. Confused, Barbara stood still, uncertain what to do.

Dr. Fowler hastily thrust Eloise away, and with a flushed face, in answer to the chief official's stern: "I must request your resignation at once!" answered defiantly:

"I refuse to resign!"

Dr. Boylan, with a severe glance and gesture, sent Eloise to the house, and with a cold look at Barbara reminded her of her duties. Later, she saw Dr. Fowler go into the private office with Boylan; and audaciously venturing near, she heard their voices harshly raised in altercation. She felt greatly relieved. Now Dr. Fowler would be dismissed. The girl would suffer terribly, of course, from the separation, but she was young; the fancy would pass. This was not love, but just youth's call, youth's love of love, Barbara knew; the early, common crave.

Therefore with a dismay which nearly overwhelmed her she beheld the sequel to Eloise's little tragedy in the garden, and learned finally what had taken place in the private office.

Dr. Fowler had told Superintendent Boylan that he had rights which the Superintendent and Board of Trustees must respect; and that if this girl, against his inclination, had manifested her feeling for him in private or in public, it was no reason why he should suffer the odium of dismissal for her sake. He had said her advances were repugnant to him, and that time and again he had reproved her, but that his patient efforts to repress her had been of no avail.

Superintendent Boylan had then insisted on his explaining himself more definitely, and Fowler had uttered the hideous words that spelled the doom of Eloise.

"Eloise Barton is a nymphomaniac; you doctors ought to have seen that long ago! She belongs in an asylum for that class."

Dr. Boylan, a fair physician, but a dull interpreter of human nature, struck aghast by this emphatic statement, at once had offered full apology to his inferior,

and Barbara had been obliged to look on helplessly while the girl's doom had been sealed in commitment papers signed by Dr. Fowler and Superintendent Boylan, consigning Eloise to a madhouse "for the rest of her natural life."

Barbara protested against what she knew was but a criminal subterfuge by Dr. Fowler to evade the consequences of his discovered carnal interest in the girl. That his lust had gone no further had been due only to lack of opportunity. The girl's passional nature had been awakened. She was a splendid, healthy young animal, and her moral nature was probably yet in abeyance, as it is in myriads. How Eloise would have conducted herself in a crisis of emotion, Barbara could not tell, for it had not come to that; but the effect of her spontaneous response to the physician had been hideous beyond belief.

Barbara's stormy protest that the girl was normal as herself, and that Dr. Fowler had from the first sought Eloise for the bestowal of his attentions, of course resulted in her own prompt dismissal. Eloise had no friends or kin, and the institution was coiled about with red tape. Attempts by Barbara at extended protest would be regarded merely as the malicious tattling of a discharged nurse.

But Barbara found her reward, although at first she did not realize it. This hideous act of injustice took her out of herself. She began to ponder some one else's wrongs—and when, after some difficulty, she found out that Eloise had been committed to Allandale, with a half-defined hope in her heart that she might yet be of service to the girl, she applied for a place there on the strength of her credentials from the Floating Hospital, and was instantly engaged. She had now been at Allandale nearly eight months;

eight dreary, monotonous months; and that fine fervor, that enthusiasm with which her profession had once inspired her, had vanished. Allandale now seemed to her but a cloak to cover pestilent, noisome, horrible things.

Of Eloise, Barbara had seen little. Her duties had brought her seldom into contact with the girl, and Barbara had been obliged to rest satisfied in knowing that Eloise was receiving fair treatment. Later, Barbara would try what could be done.

As for Eloise herself, she had drooped and pined and rebelled for a time, and the wistful look in her eyes had set Barbara's heart aching again. Dimly Eloise had begun to understand it was Dr. Fowler himself who had not only repudiated her, but had taken away the liberty, the restoration to the world, which had seemed so close at hand. And ah! not only liberty, but that girlish dream she had so warmly, so devoutly, dreamed!

But Eloise was very young, Barbara reflected, and the perfidies of existence had not, as yet, sunk very deep. Life, to the young girl, had revealed only one face, that of love. Just now this was beginning to fade, to change into repulsive features, but she was too young, so Barbara thought, to be yet thoroughly embittered.

Across the wide range of glowing green, Barbara, on her bench under the maple, looking up from her hopeful reverie about Eloise, caught sight of a figure clad in white duck, nonchalantly strolling. Instantly, she remembered the attendant she had seen in the corridor, a week or so before.

It startled her to realize that she recognized the man by his figure and his walk, and a strange feeling came over her.

Why was Barbara blushing?

The consciousness that her blood had mounted to her face, tingeing it like a rosy summer sunrise, amazed Barbara more than it vexed her; and it perplexed her, too.

Clearly, she told herself, she certainly must have glimpsed in this man's face, there in the corridor, a kind of honest compliment, interest, liking, approval—or perhaps admiration?

Again she blushed—this time hotly and angrily. Then she frowned perplexedly. "What's the meaning of this?" she asked herself. "He's coming nearer, as if I were drawing him this way. I'll not stay. I'll not meet him. I'm blushing like a fool! It's ridiculous, absurd, shameful!"

She rose hastily to escape the apparently destined encounter, well-nigh ready to cry with vexation at herself. But Don saved her the embarrassment of retreat. Was it that he now had recognized, and was purposely avoiding her? He changed the direction of his now less nonchalant steps, just after she arose.

Very, very curiously, so it seemed to her, this gave her fresh humiliation, and aroused a dull vexation besides. She resumed her seat on the bench under the sheltering tree, and tried to resume her book; but it had ceased to be fascinating. Barbara's heart, her physical heart, was beating fast.

Ah! Barbara, poor Barbara, with your history, what business have you to have a heart at all? Poor, human Barbara, is a cup of more potent, far more cruel poison to be pressed against your lips? Are you going to fall really in love? You, shadowed with a secret shame—and madly love in vain? And what are you doing now, as you lean back against your settle with heavy-lidded, half-shut eyes and a love-alluring

tinge of that blush still on your face? Are you trying, as a psychological medical expert, to diagnose clearly, for the sake of defeating surely, the first fine, subtle symptoms of that divine disease, called love?

It has never been cured, sweet Barbara—never!—except by more love!

CHAPTER XXII

Don Also Grows Wise

DON'S hours were from six to six, with one hour off at noon. He had entire charge of the violent ward, although under the supervision and authority of Spear or such deputies as the latter might assign to it.

Don speedily realized that by no possibility, even had he been a thoroughly trained nurse, could he properly perform all the duties devolving on him. There was work enough in that ward to keep six attendants busy.

The second week after his arrival, he was meditatively strolling down Ilex Avenue—one of the walks in the grounds—grateful for the soft, summer breeze heavy with clover-scent and the richness of garden flowers. Soul-sick from the day's experiences, he was momentarily tempted to toss to the winds this noisome assignment and get as far away as possible from the horrible miasma that hung like a dead weight upon his consciousness. But he had promised Dr. Clark to stay a month; so stay he would. And as he strolled and smoked, and came up the Avenue and turned again, a fierce disgust of himself made itself felt. How, pray, he bitterly queried, had he been any different from those horrible creatures inside that room with the iron-grated windows?

He had been in just such hideous bondage himself,

only his had been entered into voluntarily, while the poor wretches here had no choice in the matter.

Don's jaw clamped on his pipe.

"No more booze in mine!" he growled. "*One* thing is damn sure—I'm done with it, forever!"

Those two weeks at Allandale had put the seal on his resolve. He was free, at last, from the curse of years. He had resolved before, and had fallen times without number. This he had not forgotten; but somehow it was utterly different now. The invisible tyrant that had goaded him downward was now in the grip of a Self he had never known before, a Self high-mounted like a charioteer, holding the reins above all circumstances, and speeding on, victorious. The terrors he had always dreaded, now seemed mere pigmies. He felt possessed at last of strength magnificent. And so, unconsciously squaring his fine shoulders, he walked on, and back, and over the Avenue again, till the sun went out of the sky and the dusk of midsummer began to steal over all things, like a spell.

As he turned near the south gate, a woman came through. He considered swiftly that one of the nurses must have been in the city for the afternoon. The Boston train was now leaving a trail of smoke, half a mile away.

Don remained stock-still. It was awkward not to speak.

"You were the only passenger for Allandale to-night?" he ventured politely. He had raised his white cap and was opening the gate for her.

Barbara—for it was Barbara—glanced at him, and smiled.

"Thank you," she said, then waited, as he closed the gate. "Yes," answering his question, "Dr. Wilson

sent me to the city today, and the matter kept me till the last train."

Don was now walking beside her. It seemed quite natural, easy and commonplace enough, as Barbara confidentially assured her inward critic. By the time they had come slowly up the long Avenue they had learned each other's names, and had quite professionally compared experiences; Don, of course, allowing Barbara to think he was in reality what he seemed to be, an attendant in the violent ward. But, later, as they were on the point of separating, he said perplexedly: "I have a most unaccountable feeling that I've seen you before, Miss Avery; yet I'm certain I've never heard your voice till now. It's almost impossible for me to forget a voice; and even if I could, yours is unforgettable."

He did not smile, nor did he speak as if aiming a compliment at her, and Barbara's heart jumped at the sheer sincerity of his tone. It did not seem to occur at all to him that his phrase formed an ultimate flattery.

"I have seen *you* before," said Barbara impulsively, moved by his frankness, "and I can tell you where. My memory is much better than yours, you see."

Barbara was faintly smiling now; and there was a suggestion of girlish coquetry in her manner. Her eyes were almost on a level with Don's and they mingled with his, a moment of moonlit silence.

Curious how very young she suddenly felt! For so long a time her thoughts had perforce been guilty ones and she had been compelled to keep even the shadow of any feeling off her face, that now the uplifting thought she could be perfectly natural, thrilled her very soul.

"May I see you again?" Don asked, his cap tucked

under his arm. "We're both here under one roof, now,"—he nodded at the gray stone building. "The work is horrible, I'm so lonesome!" Then, noting her hesitance: "Don't you ever walk down Ilex Avenue, after sundown?" His voice was boyishly eager—and oh! what music to her!

"I'm off duty at six," she answered, amazed at herself.

"So am I," he returned, adding firmly: "That settles it. If I happen to be walking at the same hour you are, it won't be half so lonely at Allandale!" He smiled at her with such a confident air that she went indoors half-smiling, too, and without having said No.

Don's fifteenth day at Allandale began as a repetition of the first, but it was not destined so to end. Already he had learned things that sickened him; he'd seen things unprintable—unspeakable. Some of the patients in his own ward whom, on that first day, he had believed at least to be irresponsible melancholics, he had found, in fact, not violent at all. They had been sent there through the dishonest reports of nurses, who for some spite or other had had them thus "transferred."

Once in that ward, it wouldn't be possible for them to retain reason long. From being patients for whom there was every hope of recovery, they would inevitably become hopelessly insane. Two patients who had come in the day before, now had swollen faces and purple patches beneath their eyes. When Don inquired into this, he was informed that black eyes and lame jaws were frequent occurrences because of altercations between patients.

Hicks, of whose perfect sanity Don was convinced, told him the truth. "Don't you believe it, sir!" said he. "It's the beatings the nurses give 'em."

Don remembered Dr. Clark had told him that few patients initiate a fight; that the nurses almost always take the lead. Yet, when a fight has been started, the patient is often ready then to pitch in, and seems, indeed, to derive considerable morbid enjoyment from a "mix-up." It breaks the monotony, to smash a face or get smashed up, one's self.

In spite of Dr. Clark's assurances that there was an almost entire absence of danger in dealing with the insane, ghastly shrinkings crept over Don at times, and almost overcame him. In his normal state, Don would nonchalantly have measured fistic skill with almost anyone; but now he frequently felt a dreadful sinking at the pit of his stomach. Every moment found him apprehensive. Hicks was a most faithful worker, and so were several others; and they relieved him of much work that was revolting. But one thing, almost intolerable, he must endure every hour of the day without surcease of one moment.

That was the noise, which was hellish.

Good God!—could it be that these wrecks, these befouled, slaving, cursing, howling creatures, these bodily travesties of humanity, had ever been men? The melancholics wailed a mournful weird, and sobbed at intervals; and through this there slobbered the awful laughter of idiots, while above these dreadful sounds rang the fierce yells and curdling shrieks of maniacs.

Then came the thudding of one body, and then another, on the floor! This was the falling of the epileptics; for when one falls the others catch the impulsion. Don's nerves quivered, as if a file had been drawn through his clenched teeth.

Incessantly the curses of an inventor—a little, pale, blue-eyed man with frowsy brown hair and an intellectual forehead—were howled or snarled. Countless

times this man begged Don to look into the utility of his invention. He had been robbed of the child of his brain and thrust in here, so he averred, that others might make millions through it. The day came when Don knew that the poor, cracked little fellow had spoken the truth. Yet, however he might have come into the institution, he was now quite helplessly mad.

Near by, Don saw an effeminate degenerate, looking with longing eyes at a satyriacal monster who stared stonily ahead, hour after hour, like a caged gorilla.

One poor, drooling creature kept close watch over some pieces of brown paper which he believed would call out enough money to pay off the national debt—a bogey that bothered his frayed little brain much more than it ever did any statesman's.

Another whose muscles all tried to move in different directions at the same time, a wretched St. Vitus dancer, frequently aroused by his antics the horrid mirth of the maniacs, who laughed like fiends in the Hell that Capitalism creates.

Don grew subtly conscious that he was gaining the confidence of those who were still sane enough to feel some hope of release. A few mustered up courage to tell him the stories of their lives. He wrote down their names. His long newspaper training, his almost photographic memory, made it unnecessary to take notes of their experiences. The poor creatures, overjoyed to find some one with a human interest in them, became extravagant in their expressions of gratitude. Hicks hung back at first, half distrustful—but he too was presently won over.

“How long have you been in this ward, Mr. Hicks?” Don asked, one day.

“About a month. I was transferred from another

department to the Inferno, as we call this place."

"Why did they transfer you?"

"I had an inflammation of the ear. The presence of pus in the mastoid made me crazy for a few days. That's what they say, anyway, and I'm not disposed to dispute it; though I remember fairly well, just the same, all the circumstances of my being brought here."

"But why on earth did they transfer you to *this* ward? That's what I want to know."

"Oh, it's the old, old story. I protested in the other department, because I was not receiving proper treatment for my inflammation. The pain was intolerable. They paid no more attention to me than they do to the rats, or the roaches, or the bugs that overrun the wards. But I've always paid my taxes, and by God, I know my rights! They said they'd put me in this ward to be tamed. Maybe, they *will* tame me," he added grimly, "but before they do, they'll know there's been a Hell of a fight!"

He was mute, a moment, as if planning it.

"I'm a trifle weak yet from my ear-trouble," said he, at last. "That's kept me awake for nights, though God knows I couldn't have slept anyhow, for the noise of the patients. Yes, indeed, some are better off than others, and their friends and relatives visit them. They tip the attendants liberally, you see. Some of the patients have private rooms and don't have to work, unless they ask for it, as occasionally they do to while away the days. I believe in working, all right, but not in doing what the nurses are paid for doing, though I'm glad to help out a nurse like you. I protested against that, too. Anyway, they think I'm here for good. But they're mistaken."

"I'm glad to hear you say that," interjected Don.

"Thanks. I know my letters never get beyond the Superintendent's office, but just before you came one of the nurses got drunk. He was a fairly good fellow, but he liked to put it all over us, just the same, when he got soused. He'd been here so long he'd grown brutalized, you see. On his day off I bribed him to mail a letter to my sister. She lives in Chicago. I have a feeling that I'm going to get out pretty soon."

"How did you get in originally?" asked Don. "You don't seem to me a man who has ever been insane."

"Oh! I came here all straight enough. I had brain fever and I didn't get normal, afterward. Sick and without money, I had lost all track of my folks, and the first thing I really knew, somebody had shoved me in here. I'm not finding any fault with *that*; but these doctors knew precious well the exact moment I came back to myself, and should have let me go. The fact is, they're *afraid* to let me go, now. Over in the other ward I saw a patient ram a spoon down the throat of another patient, who died from his injuries, and nothing was done about it. I hollered about that, too. And—they sold the poor fellow's body to the dissecting school." Don drew back aghast.

"Mr. Hicks," said he gravely, "are you quite sure? You know there is a rule of this institution that the relatives of a patient must be notified, if he dies; and if no reply is received, a notice of the death must be published for five days before the body can be disposed of."

"Oh, yes, I know!" Hicks was grimly smiling now. "But they don't do it, just the same. I've seen what I've seen, and I know what I'm talking about. You ask Allison," he nodded at a melancholic moping by the window. "He was in that other ward with me, and he had his five senses then, better than he's had

any one of 'em since he came here. But he can remember, as I do, that Marriot, a poor young fellow, died from starvation. He had a horrible fever and they didn't do a damned thing to reduce it—nothing at all, by God! But the record showed (that's what the nurse that was here before you said), that he had received ice-water baths and other treatments. That's for the eyes of the trustees, if anything should come up. And Merwin—his case was hushed up, too. Another patient kicked him to death. Allison will remember. He and I saw it. And it wasn't in the violent ward, either!"

Don sat stupefied, his thoughts fighting to array themselves coherently. Presently Hicks continued:

"Last night, when you went off duty, I made Spear angry. He's wanted me for a long time to do something that would give him an excuse to go for me. He found his excuse last night. It's a trifling one, but I know well enough what's due me, to-night. This is Saturday. Saturdays they usually hand out their smashed jaws and cracked heads. Well, anyhow, it generally saves the victims from the curse of listening on Sundays to hypocritical, tiresome sermons. The last time I 'got mine,' I was weak from vile food, the stench of the ward, and an earache. Since you've come, I've had some fresh air. I feel better, and I can put up a pretty damn good fight, if I have to. Yet I dread to-night. You look as if you could fight a little yourself. They may ask you to lend a hand."

There was that in his eyes which went to Don's heart, like a flaming arrow. Don held out his hand silently. Hicks wrung it, then with a new look got up and began to busy himself about the ward.

Because of Hicks, Don felt his labors immeasurably lightened and was deeply grateful. Each day seemed

longer and busier than the preceding one; and as the hour approached to get off duty, his nerves were jangling. No wonder, he reflected, that the majority of the attendants were uneducated rough huskies from the backwoods. It was next to impossible for a man of sensitive temperament to endure the shrieks, the stench, the ghastly immoralities and perversions, the unspeakable revolting conditions every hour revealed.

Thus at the end of only his second week at Allandale, he had accumulated enough evidence—things he himself had seen and heard—to send every official of the institution to Coventry; but some instinct warned him to wait for a climax he felt must be due at no distant date.

One night, three weeks later, he eagerly waited the moment when he should be free to go out-doors, and when he might, by some happy chance, once more find Miss Avery.

To talk with a refined woman, after having heard little but the gibbering of idiots and the yells of maniacs for twelve hours, is a genuine luxury. In the near-solitude of a beautiful park it becomes well-nigh paradisiacal. Don felt himself hungering and thirsting for a sight of her. He wondered at this, but decided his feeling was not intensified, or even influenced, at all, by her physical attractiveness. No, it was mental and moral companionship he craved in such a deep desolation of soul, amid such a whelm of inescapable abominations. That Barbara was very attractive, he candidly admitted to himself. Yet this, he reflected, was but a fortuitous, added blessing.

He had already met her two or three times in the corridor; had walked and talked with her once on Ilex Avenue; and already they were bound in cordial fellowship. That was distinctly encouraging. Yet a

curious constraint seemed apparent in her manner. He tried to analyze it. Apparently she derived considerable pleasure from his company, and yet for some reason was hesitant about yielding herself frankly, completely to a companionship so mutually agreeable. He puzzled over this not a little, at times. Well, maybe, it was only a woman's way.

Today he had been wondering if *her* experience could even in some slight degree approximate his own. He meant to ask her tonight, if he saw her. Somehow, his mind revolted at the notion of Barbara's contact with things of the sort he had seen. He tried to hope that, under no circumstances, could women patients be nearly so horrible as his own had been. This theory, however, his newspaper memory promptly refuted. He began to grieve and chafe at the unavoidable conviction that Barbara's experiences of loathsome horrors must, beyond a peradventure, be tallies, if not overtoppers of his own.

Just before he was leaving for supper, Goddard, a deputy, entered his ward and told him that Langdon, one of the huskies, had been let out for "gittin' soused," and that the projected mutilation of Hicks, for infringement of some rule the night before, would have to be put off till the following Saturday night. Goddard showed himself quite frankly disappointed, and seemed to assume that Don was aware of the impending chastisement of Hicks. Don, of course, took good care not to say that his knowledge of this projected "sporting event" had come only through the destined victim.

"Too bad it's got to be postponed," he muttered, in ironical reply, "too hellish bad, isn't it?" As he said this he reflected how profoundly grateful he was for the delay, even though such an occurrence would

mean the postponement of his own release from the most irksome assignment in his whole career.

He next finished his report and made several complaints about lack of clean bed-linen and neglect in filling requisitions for necessary medical and toilet articles in the ward. The complaint he made most emphatic of all was that a patient named Eggleston, who was very ill and should be in the hospital ward, had not been removed; that at four o'clock a peremptory message had been sent to Dr. Harlow, but at the hour of his (Don's) going off duty, no physician had as yet appeared.

Don presented his report in person to Superintendent Wilson. The latter usually examined these reports later; but, as he laid this one down, his eye caught a word. He halted Don with a gesture, while he skimmed hastily through the paper, his face flushed with annoyance.

"In future make these reports—er—that is—all reports of this nature, oral. Don't have anything of this sort in writing, Mr. Brush." Don nodded, and retreated respectfully.

"A little while longer," he communed hotly with himself on his way to the dining-room, "and the reckoning with Allandale will be due."

That night he ate supper, a wretched meal, quicker even than usual. He never lingered at any meal, for there were twenty to thirty other nurses at the table, whose manners and obscene jocosities well-nigh raised his gorge.

He took a few soothing whiffs at his pipe, as he made his way to Ilex Avenue. His indignation at Superintendent Wilson's conduct had made him temporarily oblivious of physical weariness. As he came from the dining-room through another entrance than

the one he ordinarily used, he rounded a wing of the building that he seldom had occasion to approach—the wing where the pay-patients lived. Just as he passed the first grated window on the north end of the wing, some one looked out, but almost instantly disappeared from the window.

So abrupt had been this disappearance that Don could hardly believe a patient really had looked out. Yet he felt suddenly shaken and tremulous. Though he had caught but a momentary glimpse of that emaciated face and of those horror-filled eyes, it had seemed to him—though he was, he *must be* mistaken, of course—it had seemed that the face at the window had been Harold's!

CHAPTER XXIII

Brutal Truths

A GLEAM of white through the trees gave Don the cue to shake out his pipe and hasten joyously forward.

"You were good to come!" said he, smilingly eager. Barbara gave him her hand, the shadow on her face departing.

"Has anything gone wrong?" asked he.

Barbara felt a sudden joy in a solicitude so new to her, for she had always been utterly self-reliant, asking no consideration or compassion, because trained to expect none. In her liaison with Sydney Phillips, after her first rebellion, it had been a giving rather than a receiving. Even in the days when the physician had seemed to care most for her, his infatuation had never shown itself in any real consideration; though in the fashion of infatuated men, he had been extravagant in words of adoration and in small gifts that set off her charms for his color-worshipping eyes.

She shook her head, as she made answer:

"I wanted to come. It's lonely here, and this is only the third time I've really talked with you."

Barbara's voice—the voice he had called unforgettable—was beginning to work its charm on the man now close to her; and her words, matter-of-fact as they were, thrilled him subtly. As for Barbara, she was dismayed to find herself strangely moved. She

wondered if it were not the contagion of Don's presence, of a certain boyishness that vibrated about him, despite all of the lines of care in his face.

She had fought against coming; had endeavored to steel her mind by dwelling on the ugly past. But her mind had stubbornly refused to dwell on anything in the past that was not good, and pure and precious.

So, at nightfall, she had sepulchered all other feelings, even her scorn for Sydney Phillips and her sense of shame and soilure, and had gone to the tryst on Ilex Avenue with a fine, frank, joyous longing for blameless companionship. Now, Don was looking closely at her.

"You've not answered my question yet," said he. His voice was very gentle—to his own surprise, was tender. They had sat down, side by side, on one of the benches along the Avenue. "Has anything gone wrong?"

"Has anything gone wrong?" she repeated his question, as if coming out of a reverie. "Not particularly so; that is, things are not much worse than usual. But I don't believe I can endure it here much longer. I came to Allandale on account of Eloise. That is, I knew she had been sent here, and I could work here just as well as anywhere else, and try to keep an eye on her."

"Eloise?" he questioned, feeling that here was a case of truly altruistic devotion. To seek occupation in such a place now appeared heroic to him.

Barbara told him briefly and with delicacy all she could of the case. He listened with the familiar sensation of burning rage that was fast lifting him up—redeeming him from the languor of professional cynicism which had so long corroded the best in him.

"But that's not what's annoying me today," she

said presently. "Eloise is in Ward I, and the head-nurse there is more humane than they usually are. So, for the present, she's all right. But in my ward the ward-manager seems to be a monster. Her name is Margaret King, and the only way I can describe her nature is to say that she seems drunk, actually intoxicated, with a malignant hatred of her sex. She appears utterly callous, pitiless, merciless. The attendant nurses hate her, but she's popular with the doctors. She's a rigid disciplinarian, and if discipline is the most important attribute of a nurse, then Allandale has an ideal one in Miss King!"

She shuddered; but, after a glance at Don's face of intense interest, went on:

"There's an old woman patient in my ward, at least seventy, I'm sure. She's hopelessly insane, now, but I'm told she came in here only slightly deranged. What she's gone through is quite enough to have made her a raving maniac, but she's nothing of the sort. She is ordinarily very quiet, and causes no trouble to speak of, except when she feels cold. Cold makes her nervous and noisy. The other night when it rained, the ward felt somewhat damp and chilly. She seems peculiarly susceptible to the weather, anyway. She's a Californian. Well, Miss King can't stand any noise except the horrible shrieks that come from her beatings, and she appears to enjoy—yes, positively revel—in acts that incite that poor woman to fury. What the poor old creature's real name is, nobody knows. They call her Mrs. Johns. Though she's old, she's remarkably strong and active."

"I have seen such," remarked Don.

"As I say," continued Barbara, "Mrs. Johns got nervous and noisy the other night, and Miss King, who is an Amazon herself, beat the old woman insensible."

"Oh"—as Don choked in horror—"it's happened before, they tell me. I've even heard that once they broke a girl's neck, in a bath-room here—killed her—murdered her!"

"What?" exclaimed Don. "Is it possible?"

"Not only possible, but true," answered Barbara. "It happened about two years ago, I understand. One of the nurses ordered a girl—not insane, just melancholy, and highly cultured,—to do some revolting task that never should have been put upon her, anyway. She refused. There was a fight. They finished up by dragging her into a bath-room and stripping her. She fought like mad. It was a case of a beating, anyway, so she did well to fight.

"They mastered her, of course, and flung her, naked, into the bath-tub. Two of the nurses held her there, while a third wrenched her head over the edge of the tub. Suddenly there came a snapping sound. The girl's head fell limp; her whole body relaxed. The spine had been broken. She was dead.

"Dead—murdered in cold blood—and they gave it out as—heart-failure!"

Don's fists clenched savagely.

"Oh, damnable!" he groaned. "It doesn't seem possible. Yet I know it's true. And this—this is the 'philanthropy' of modern 'Christian civilization!' Yes, it's true, all right. The things I've seen, and heard, in my ward, convince me of that."

"What have *you* heard?" asked Barbara, leaning forward.

"Well, for one thing," he answered, "I've learned that one of the common modes of punishment at this hospital is exposure of the patients to the coldest weather in winter. This is done by putting a patient into his room, opening the window and locking his

screen so that he can't close the window. The patient is deprived of his clothes, bed and bedding, and the heat is shut off from the room.

"One patient, named Patrick O'Brien, was subjected to this treatment, last winter. He was frequently left in this condition of absolute exposure. I've heard that one of the attendants used to supply him with heat in the room, give him blankets and close the window. In the morning, however, when he had left the ward, this attendant used to take away the blanket, turn off the heat and open the window again so that he mightn't be discovered in thwarting the work of his cruel torturers. One evening when he resumed his duties, he found O'Brien in a weak condition, and saw that he was sinking. The following night was his night off, and when he returned the third night, he found O'Brien dead.

"Another case was that of George Nagle, who was confined to his room in Corridor 12, at the extreme end of H-building. Nagle had no bed of any kind, no bedding and no clothes, not even a shirt. At times the same attendant found him in the coldest weather with the window open, entirely naked, huddled in a corner of his room shivering with cold. Occasionally, this attendant gave him a pair of drawers and a shirt, and when blankets were accessible gave him one, but often he could not find any blankets. Moreover, the conditions of Nagle's room were such that he could not supply him with any heat.

"Maurice Ahearn was another patient who required considerable bathing, and since the temperature of the water was usually very low and the room cold, he would almost invariably try to put his shirt on without waiting to be dried. For this, a brute named McKeever once gave him a severe beating with a push-

broom handle. Ahearn was a big man with a splendid, well developed body and a fine muscular pair of arms. On account of the nature of his insanity he would persist in reaching out to get his shirt; and every time he did so, McKeever would strike him about the arms and hands with the broom handle, until at last Ahearn was unable to lift his arms. His arms and hands were covered with welts and were much discolored.

"On one occasion Champaign, a consumptive, refused to eat his breakfast. For this refusal he was taken to the bath-room and given a cold water bath by McKeever and another attendant, Sanders. Of course he objected and struggled to get out. The beating and abuse he received I can't describe in words. His diseased lungs and generally weakened condition certainly did not permit of an ice-cold bath, for he was on the verge of collapse."

Barbara gasped, but Don kept on:

"Another case was that of Jeremiah Washington, a young colored man, whose whole career in this asylum lasted but three days. He received no special attention or treatment of any kind. On the third day he was given two baths. This patient was carried from his room to the bath by putting a twisted sheet about his neck and another about his ankles. After twisting the sheet and thus choking him, he was carried to the bath suspended by neck and ankles. Having put him in the tub and untwisted the sheet from about his neck, the attendants found that he had died there. McDonald and Lemogee were the brutes guilty of this offence.

"I know that an attendant named Clifford stated, a short time before he left the institution, that he would get rid of a few patients; and I know that five patients were carried out dead during the last weeks

of his service. I know that these patients were immediately prepared for burial, while Clifford hurled every vile epithet at the dead. Then I know that attendants have gambled on the lives of patients, and that the railroad station agent, here, has held the stakes for the bets placed on the deaths of patients at given hours, and that these patients have died as the result."

For a moment, silence. Then Barbara, seeming to rouse from her horror, said:

"Yes, I believe it all—and more. Quite parallel cruelties take place among the women, too. Miss King is certainly capable of murder. For all I know, she may already have it on her soul—if she has a soul. But in Mrs. Johns' case, I'm thankful to say, she seems to have met her match. Mrs. Johns is her particular antipathy. The old woman fights back, though, and fights well!"

There came a hint of satisfaction in Barbara's voice, which Don felt a grim exultation in noting. He knew that Barbara was like him, in rejoicing to see the trampled turn on their trampplers.

"Too bad," said he, "the patients aren't, for the most part, really able to cope with these brutes. Then there might be retributive justice done, once in a while. I, for one, can't understand how any man or woman in charge of unfortunates, can sink to such ingenious tortures—to such depths of infamy! The usual initiation of many patients is a severe beating, to begin with. 'The hospital for you!' seems to be a standard motto. Kicking a fallen patient is too common even to be noticed—kicking him in the stomach, head, face, anywhere it comes handy. Well calculated to restore sanity, eh?"

"The fiends!" muttered Barbara, biting her lip.

"Fiends is right!" assented Don. "And listen, now. I know one attendant's method of abuse is to trim a patient's finger-nails down into the quick, causing intense pain and starting the blood. How's that for scientific treatment?"

Barbara shuddered, but made no reply.

"They starve a patient, if he's *too* full of come-back," continued Don. "Starve him weak, and then maul him to a pulp. I know of one case—it happened October 11, 1913—when an attendant choked an Italian boy almost to death and then battered his head against a brick wall. This, mind you, because he had epileptic fits! Some cure, eh?"

"I myself have seen patients 'trimmed' by the 'sheeting' method—winding a sheet around the neck and twisting it, two attendants together, till the patient falls unconscious and strangling. 'Giving 'em the knee' is another stunt—holding a patient helpless on the floor, while a husky puts his knee on the victim's stomach and jounces, causing excruciating pain. Then there's the 'hypo fling.'"

"The what?" exclaimed Barbara.

"The 'hypo fling'—very scientific, indeed. Two attendants grab a patient by the feet and shoulders, throw him as high as they can, and let him fall on the cement floor. Sometimes patients are choked and thrown bodily downstairs. One fellow, Patrick Lamb, had his wrist broken that way. Another, Michael Bowden, is minus one eye, that was kicked out by a drunken attendant. And in the matter of diet, the abuse is continuous and repulsive. Look at the emaciated wretches, will you? Do you wonder, with only putrid meat and sour bread to live on? No milk, no fruit, no *nothing*? That, and the cold, and the hard work, numbs and paralyzes them. There's no recre-

ation. The only thing they can do, when not working, is stand around and stare, or get into vicious practises. No wonder they never get well! A few months in here, as a patient, would drive the average sane man stark, raving mad, or make him a suicide! It's Hell, I tell you—and they call it science! They call it philanthropy!"

"I know," said Barbara, much moved. "I've seen as much as you have, or more. Oh, how I wish they'd all fight, like old Mrs. Johns!"

"She's a good scrapper, then?" asked Don.

"Indeed she is!" answered Barbara, with satisfaction. "The fact is, that poor, crazy crone actually seems to welcome the attack, when it comes, though she does nothing to invite it. Miss King has tried over and over again to subdue her, to cow her completely, but she can't. Mrs. Johns recuperates rapidly from these assaults. Lately Miss King has got a couple of other nurses to help her, and the last time the old woman was insensible so long from the triple beating that they plunged her into a cold bath. That's a favorite method of resuscitation. Oh, yes——" at a look in Don's eyes—"I complained to the superintendent. I embodied the occurrence in my report, which I took, over Miss King's head, to the office."

Don was now smiling very grimly.

"I can tell you what happened," said he. "You were told to make such reports oral, and got a broad hint that any more such reports would probably end in your dismissal."

Barbara looked at him in surprise.

"Yes, that's exactly what happened!" She paused, and regarded the man with what seemed to him a singular, shrinking trepidation.

What had he said to cause this? He did not know

that she was asking herself whether he could read her mind like an open book; and if her mind, her heart.

Suddenly Don took her hands in his.

"Listen," he said with an earnestness that thrilled her. "I feel I can trust you. I have discovered—well—I'm here on purpose to get proofs of the iniquities rampant in Allandale; here for a noted surgeon and reformer—people call him a crank, fanatic, agitator, anarchist—you must have heard of him. These things—the things you have seen——" he was now speaking with headlong rapidity—"will all come out in the mass of cumulative evidence I am piling up against this institution. Are you willing to stand up with me?"

CHAPTER XXIV

Self-Revelations

SHE had shrunk a little at first, partly from the thrill of his touch, partly from the vehemence of his manner. He had felt her faint mental withdrawal, through her hands, which he still held closely clasped, as if they belonged to him; but her expression, from being introspective, had suddenly become determined.

"I will!" she answered firmly, and added: "I hesitated at first; an exposé always means publicity of a hateful sort and——" her eyes had grown shadowed and her mouth bitter in its curve. She steeled herself against the thought of self, and continued with an increasing vehemence that Don admired:

"I have suffered much. Naturally, therefore, I shrink from anything that might possibly revive old wretchedness, or might bring new pain. It's cowardly and selfish, but—well, I've made up my mind to ignore my own desires. You may count on me."

He released her hands with a grateful pressure and with a look of such keen appreciation and admiration blent that it brought fresh color into her face.

They were still sitting on the long iron bench at the end of Ilex Avenue, directly across a branching path which looked as if it might lead anywhere—or nowhere. They seemed for the moment, far, very far away from the world.

He looked at her tenderly as well as curiously; and she felt, although it was not touching her, his arm, like a symbol of close protection, along the back of the bench.

True, her words had stirred the man's curiosity. Had this woman, like himself, a very cruel past? If so, he must not pry into it. His eyes grew full of pity and understanding.

Barbara now found it hard to look at him, and for more than one reason. Don was at times a very handsome man. Usually his face was immobile, mask-like, with all the inscrutability of a clever comedian's features. But his eyes could glow as full of soft underlights at play as a mountain-brook, and with a deep warmth in their softness.

Her heart beat as it had never yet once beat in all her life. To what abysses of self-revealing was he leading her? Mentally she shook herself. This man was nothing to her; never could be, of course; what then mattered it what she told?

Don, too, felt himself deeply moved—hurried, as it were, toward some goal he neither saw nor understood. His heart was pounding rapidly.

Who shall reverse decrees of nature? When two people, a man and a woman, sit in the opalescent dusk together, and both are lonely and both have suffered, what shall stay the hand of Fate?

Don felt an intense desire, a passionate yearning, to hear from her own lips her whole story. His innate delicacy could scarce restrain his tongue from questioning.

Something in the bitterness of her calm smile—was it bitter or only intensely sad?—roused strange emotions. Unease, disturbance, possessed him. Was he fool enough to suppose, he asked himself, that this

woman could have had no experiences; have loved no man in the life she had lived before their paths had crossed? God! What difference could it make, in any case?

He waxed angry and disgusted with himself; but the next moment he realized that it *did* matter—mattered immensely—and that he, Don Brush, had begun to care tremendously about everything, even the remotest trifles, that concerned or might concern this woman beside him. And best of all—ah! gloriously best of all!—through this unease, fear, wonder and angry dismay burned a fierce joy that made itself the supreme emotion of the moment.

Don realized that he, on his part, had much to confess. Should he tell her of Yetive now? With this question, all the folly and wickedness of his youth, the waste of golden years, rushed over him like a whelming tidal wave.

He was mad—oh, surely, mad beyond a doubt, insane as any patient in Allandale—to expect he could be a friend to this woman. Friend? Friendship? Something mighty — elemental — surged within him. Something incomparably more intense than any early thrill bade him rather strive to win her love. Love? Had it then come to this—had the miracle been worked? Did he, Donald Brush, truly love?

Love so suddenly, and after only a few brief meetings, a woman he had not known existed, just a few weeks ago?

What of Yetive? The soul of him searched itself swiftly and curiously. Had she lost the old disturbing power over him—the physical fascination that even recently, after a lapse of years, like Circe in old Homer's tale supreme, had had power to debase him to a swine?

It must be so. As he now thought of Yotive and his life with her, it was like thinking of a pestilential corpse well buried. Even his old loathing of himself, for ever having felt her spell, had gone glimmering. Another miracle had been wrought; at last he was doubly free.

But memory, acute and pitiless, reminded him of the wasted years. Leave Circe out of count—what of his own debauched, degraded self? What reason had he to suppose that from the ashes of his olden self a new one had arisen, purified by the fires?

The splendid strength of which he had recently been so confident, now, in this moment of self-stripping, self-beholding, self-judging, seemed alas! a futile thing. Who, what, was he, quite aside from these other considerations, to think of a woman in his life? He, Donald Brush, without money or position, snatched from the gutter by one who was laboring to loosen the fetters from thousands of wretched beings? Don shrank abashed from the light his own soul threw on him.

The woman broke the silence.

"Why are you here?" she asked, suddenly. "What's preying on your mind? For that something *is* preying, I know; my woman's intuition tells me that!"

Don turned to her with relief.

"Yes," he said eagerly, "you're right. It's the strangest thing—the story is a long one. I had a close friend; in fact," with a touch of bitterness, "he was my only one, save Dr. Clark. For many weeks I haven't laid eyes on him; haven't had a word from him!"

She uttered an exclamation, leaning forward.

"Tonight as I came round the north wing, I thought, just for a second, I saw him at the window.

It couldn't have been, of course. I've been thinking of him almost all day, steadily, and probably my thinking conjured up the semblance of his face. I——"

"But it *could* be he. It is. It must be!" she said, her voice taking a deeper tone. "I saw him myself—I'm sure of it now!"

Don had risen. A sense of mystery and of some underlying horror tensed them both.

"You, Barbara! You saw him? In that window——?"

"Yes!" She thrilled at the sound of her name on his lips. "And that wasn't the first time. More than a month ago I saw him in the grounds over there. He was out with about a dozen other patients, taking the air. I wondered, then, why he was here. He was quite a long way off. I couldn't then feel absolutely certain he was the same man up there in the window. But I thought it was he, though changed."

Don was quivering in excitement—one with hers.

"But, Harold *here*?" His tone became incredulous. "It can't be. I made my mind up that I must be wrong, and when I saw you, I dropped the matter, as an unreality, a trick of fancy. The thing is preposterous!" He stared away in a daze.

"Barbara," said he, "it's not impossible, after all. I'm beginning to see how it might be. Harold"—he groaned heavily—"is it—my God, is it possible Sydney Phillips and that crowd have done for you?"

"Sydney Phillips?"

Barbara gasped, clutching at his arm. "Is *he* concerned in it?"

"You know that man, too?" demanded Brush, aghast.

"God, yes!" she groaned. "Only too well, only too terribly, too fatally well!"

Came a moment's silence, while Don tried in vain to muster his thoughts. Then the woman spoke.

"And do you think Phillips is connected with this affair, some way or other?"

"I don't know. I think so—he must be——" Don drew his hand across his forehead in bewilderment.

"Harold—his last name's Fitzgerald—is an inventor," Don continued. "He came East to get capital, a few weeks ago, to incorporate and market an invention which he and Phillips evidently believed meant millions. Phillips had given him letters to friends in Boston—Jackberry, a prominent lawyer, and Winn, a retired outfitter, promoter and philanthropist. Harold told me——"

Don rose in his excitement and caught her hand in his. She stood up, too. He drew her arm through his, and began walking slowly up the path, as if by measured bodily exercise he were seeking to steady his thoughts.

"Harold told me, just at the last, that things were not going well," said Don, presently, "and that he distrusted them all by turns. I don't believe, though, he suspected Phillips. His periods of depression, though frequent, were brief. He was the most buoyant fellow you could possibly imagine—a sublimely optimistic soul. He was expecting Phillips, the day of the big Picture-Show in Boston. From that day to this, I've never seen him, never even heard from him!"

"How soon did you find out he'd disappeared?" she asked very practically.

"Not for two weeks," Don replied; then, noting her look of amazement, he plunged.

"Barbara, you might as well know it right now. There's a disgusting disgrace connected with those two weeks, that I didn't want to tell you tonight, though

I meant to before—before I should tell you more. God! if I'd only been a man, Harold Fitzgerald could never have been spirited away and hidden so long. I'd have raised such everlasting blazes they would have had to produce him in short order. But I failed him——” His voice fell in utter despondency.

“Was—a woman—connected with those two weeks?” asked Barbara gravely, with a singular stab of jealousy at her heart.

“No, and—yes,” he answered, with sorrowful reluctance. “I'll tell you everything, dear Barbara. Listen—you know I love you! You *must* know it, by now! It doesn't matter that I've really known you only ten days. I didn't mean to speak out yet; but I can't help it. I know I am not fit to be your mate. I've been a bestial drunkard, Barbara, but I'm going to try and redeem myself, in spite of my past, and make you mine, if I have to pursue you all over God's universe.”

She put her fingers across his mouth to stay the torrent of his mad extravagancies. Oh! merciful God, why had this boon been offered her too late?—this crown she must put away? Her lover kissed those fingers pressed on his lips, then laid them across his eyes; and she felt the start of unaccustomed tears.

“Don't tell me any more, Donald,” she gently bade him. “I don't want to know all—tonight.” She paused again. “When you leave here”—the words came with difficulty—“it's likely you and I will never meet any more. Oh—don't!”—as he made a half-imploping, an all-worshipping movement toward her—“It's not on account of what you've told me. That has nothing to do with it. There's another reason”—she faltered—“but—but—let's think entirely of your friend tonight. Maybe I can help you. I think I can.

You must not, oh! you shall not fail him now!"

"You're right, Barbara," he answered, "tonight Harold must come first, but afterward——!" He was gazing at her now, with eager eyes, in the thickening dusk; and faintly she discerned a look of suffering that hurt her like a blow. Ah! What a face Don's was to reflect emotion, when this broke over self-control! The kind of suffering now upon it seemed only to accentuate its attractiveness for her. Perhaps before they parted forever, thought Barbara, he would let her kiss him once upon the mouth!

"Do you think he recognized you?" she asked hastily, her heart nearly stifling her.

"I'm not sure." Don was regaining self-control. "It was only the glimpse of an instant, you know, and he had changed fearfully."

"He couldn't have known you, or he'd have stayed at the window—wouldn't he?" queried Barbara.

"Perhaps." Don's tone was doubting. "But I had an impression that some one hauled him away."

"Oh!" gasped Barbara.

"Would it be possible at all, Barbara, for you to get into the paid patients' wing?"

"Possible?" echoed Barbara. "*I will!*"

"You'll have to find some plausible excuse."

"I'll invent one," said Barbara, with calm sublimity.

"And then?" Don's tone grew hopeful.

"Then, I'll find out first if he's the man I saw that day; and if so, how long he's been here, and why. If possible, I'll let him know you're here, and will help him. I'm assuming, of course"—she looked at Don with that sudden doubt we all have, when insanity is a question—"that he's here against his will. Is it possible that he—may be——?"

"Harold Fitzgerald is perfectly sane!" cried Don.

"Saner than I have ever been—sane as you are yourself! This isn't the first time a man of genius has been called crazy and shut up in a madhouse. It seems as if I couldn't wait to release him. I'd like to expose Allandale this very hour!"

"And spoil everything? Oh! Don't be impatient—Donald! It's only by going slowly and carefully that we can succeed. This very crisis must make you still more cautious!"

Don peered at her with a long, inscrutable look that confused her, yet set her heart beating violently.

"There's that about you, Barbara dear, that suggests trained strength and self-reliance," said he. "You speak like one accustomed to command."

"A physician, and a surgeon particularly, must be self-reliant and must often command." She broke off short.

"You?" he cried. "Are *you* a surgeon, Barbara?"

"I was!" replied she, confusedly, then added: "That was all in that other life of mine, the life I don't like to remember."

The shadow had come back over her face. Don checked the impetuous question near his lips. They were now walking toward the south entrance of the big gray stone building. He had kept her arm in his; she had not even tried to withdraw it.

As they paused to say good-bye, not far from the entrance, he again took both her hands in his, and tried to search her eyes; but the lids lowered. He was fiercely tempted to kiss the quivering lips, now so near, so very near, his own. But he drew back; and instead, bent and kissed both her hands. Not another word was uttered, as they parted.

When Barbara reached her small, cell-like room, locked her door and turned on the electric, she stood

for a moment looking down at her hands curiously, as if searching for the prints of his kisses. Then she hastily let loose her showering hair.

This seemed to unprison her spirit. She leaned back in her wicker rocker with a faraway gaze, forgetting for a while the asylum with all its horrors, hardly remembering even Eloise and Harold as parts of the evening talk with Don. All her heart and mind were conjoined on this terribly cruel, but strangely sweet, new mystery in life—that she, the well-poised Barbara, was utterly, elementally, in love with this man.

And what struck her—happy as now she realized herself to be—strangest of all, was her feeling that this passion on her part was virginal; one that seemed to revirgin her and make her a girl again. What miracle was this? She tried to count over the memory of his endearments, his kisses against her finger tips, the pressure of his lips on her hands, the sound of his voice calling her “Barbara.”

These precious endearments were, after all, but small in grace and ardency compared with such as—her heart whispered—she would have revelled in lavishing on this man in return, if ever it could have been!

Barbara felt how eagerly she could pour from an ever brimming urn the waters of passion, always fresh and pure. Ah! never a crave or disappointment should he know, if only she could have his life in her keeping! And—could she belong to him—she started at the conviction now forcing itself upon her that she, in such a divine event, would be able utterly to forget her past of loveless, sordid shame.

CHAPTER XXV

Confession is Good for the Soul

LEAVING out of count a stray glimpse of her in the quadrangle or on the grounds at a distance, when not at liberty to join her, Don did not see Barbara for a week that seemed an age. It being understood that she was to meet him, soon as news of Harold came to her ken, she deemed it best to shun Ilex Avenue till then. While there was no absolute reason they should not casually meet on the grounds to stroll and talk, Barbara's instinct advised her to avoid any chance of starting asylum gossip. So night after night Don waited and fumed inwardly, smoking on the bench under the maple.

Yet, impatient as he was for news of Harold, and with a burning eagerness to feel near him again the woman he loved, he felt confident hope and something best described as a compound of moral and spiritual exaltation. It actually seemed to him as if the ugly years had fallen away from him. A youthfulness of spirit, long a stranger to his memory, was beginning to permeate him with slow deliciousness, as if it were some elixir of wizardry. Impetuous ardor was replacing the languor of his studied cynicism.

Analyzing his own weaknesses, he wondered whether a large part of the charm Barbara possessed for him were not her spiritual strength, although—a lover's vision always exaggerates beauty—he had come to

regard her as magnificently beautiful and supremely sweet. Was hers a far stronger nature, which had flung a thrall upon him? He did not rebel at the thought of his own weakness. What did it matter, anyway, if she were immensely superior? To win her, make her his prize, would be all the greater victory.

As for Yetive, he had practically ceased to think of her at all. The obsession of her personality had been annihilated as by a lightning-stroke. As he smoked, he mused on Barbara, grieved that she had been so long apart from his life, and wondered, more for her than for himself, about the past from which her memory seemed to recoil. Then he worried over Harold; and finally, with a seriousness just short of despondency, began to consider the practical problems of the immediate future, problems that had never before given him any particular concern.

Things in his ward had been no more trying than usual, with the exception of one horrible incident. An elderly patient, Thomas Evans, had been transferred thither. This act of transference, implying that Evans was now reckoned "violent," had clearly exerted a profoundly depressing effect on this rather fine-featured old specimen of the buoyant Irish race. Don instantly determined to lift him, if possible, out of his utter despair.

It happened to be the day when one of the spiritual advisers made his weekly visit. There were two of these professional bringers of comfort and the glad tidings of salvation—a priest and a parson. One might suppose that such, if the spirit of Christ had really "called" them to serve, would have tried to come every day, instead of peddling the gospel around once a week in such petty packages as to be rightly

considered mere samples, left for advertisements. Don had been informed by Hicks, that the sane inmates always referred to these clerics as "the comedians," or "the Two Dromios." Passing through the ward, he happened to overhear Evans making a pleading speech, though he caught only a few of the words. Father Schreyer was listening with an air of profound interest. Don purposely passed that way again, to get at least the flavor, if not the substance, of the priestly reply. He had always felt a sort of vague respect for Catholic priests in general, and was both temperamentally and experientially broad enough to know that the lives of some Catholic priests have been, and are, of considerable practical benefit and spiritual comfort to a good many in the never-thinned ranks of the wretched. The smooth, suave tones of this particular son of Rome, were, however, lacking in sincerity. Yet there was an undeniable charm in the priest's manner and smile. He heard Father Schreyer say cordially, after something he failed to catch:

"Well, Thomas, my son, 'tis a fine day, ain't it, a day when it feels good merely to be alive. We must be grateful for all favors."

"'Tis a fine day, your Riverence," Evans replied, "but what is it to a day that wud be twice as fine as this?"

The priest, smiling, answered evasively: "Next week I may bring you good news."

On the instant a light went out in the old man's face, and left it in ashen darkness. His head dropped forward and he said no more. The "comedian" passed on, listening casually, and interjecting a few smooth, soothing words here and there amid what were to him but monotonous complaints against the misadministration of the Asylum. Then he went to his regular

fine weekly lunch with the Superintendent, with whom, although that official was only "a black Protestant," his Reverence was on remarkably warm, yes, warm to toasting terms.

That noon Don's blood boiled, when dinner was dished up to the patients in his ward. It was "chowder" day. The attendant deposited, on the long table, a huge bowl of fish chowder, and two thick chunks of bread. There was neither napkin, salt nor pepper. The bread was doughy and sour. Don turned with a shudder from the sight of the lunatics eating; but the shudder changed to sick repulsion, when one gibbering maniac, with a yell of glee, plucked a cockroach from the chowder and went dancing down the ward, holding it aloft in triumph, and shouting: "'Tis the soul of Father Schreyer come to dine with us today—hooray—HOORAY!!!"

He thrust the loathsome insect almost in Don's face. A soul-nausea swirled over Don, as he thought of the helpless maniacs' wrongs.

Next morning, when he came on duty, he found old Thomas in the bath-room, throat cut from ear to ear. On the gore-dabbled shirt of the suicide was pinned this note:

"Rev. Father: I didn't have time for confession, absolution and the sacraments. So you needn't bother greasing my toes.

THOMAS EVANS."

Labeled, "To Whom it may Concern," a neatly written and perfectly spelled letter lay on the floor. Don picked this up hastily and thrust it into his pocket. That letter should take no chance of suppression. In his room, he read it;

"I have been here eight years. I was never insane and his Reverence knows it. My children grew too fine for their old father, so they put me away. Father Schreyer knows how they did it, too. Each week for eight years I have pleaded with him to take steps for my release. He has promised me, and broken his word so many hundred times, that I have lost all faith in everything.

"Today my last hope died. I ask that you bury me beside my wife. I own a lot in Mt. Hope. She and I once promised each other to sleep the last sleep side by side. You can do that much for me, but I do not believe you will. For eight years I have lived in Hell. In the summer the ward chokes us with its heat and smell and noise—oh, God, the noise! In winter we shiver from the cold. They yank me out of bed to work in the stable, the pig-sty or the hen-house. But I don't complain of that. It's better than to sit always thinking, thinking, thinking. There are no newspapers, or books, or magazines or letters. We just exist like animals, and sit and brood. If our feet hurt from our corns—and our feet can't help it from the brogans they give us—they laugh.

"Look at my teeth. They were white and strong when I came in. Those they have not punched out are loose from neglect, and they ache. They laugh at that, and let them ache. We dread the bath. Sometimes we are scalded and sometimes we are blue with cold. It doesn't matter to them. Hundreds of times I've seen and felt these things. Sometimes there'd be an empty bed and a new-made grave. Sunday is the worst day. They don't let us out for an airing between working hours. We brood all day. We don't pray much. How can we? We sleep only when they dose us with drugs.

"I don't know how I've lived through it. A man dies a thousand deaths in this place. I guess my time's about up. It's taken me four weeks to write this letter, yet I was once a fair and easy penman. If His Reverence doesn't help me soon, I must help myself.

THOMAS EVANS."

The farce of the coming of the State Board of Visitors was also an event of edification during this infernal week. On Wednesday the notification came, and the whole institution was astir. The visitors arrived Friday. They formed a fine-looking group, and each had an air of serious purpose and more than average official intelligence. Almost at once they sat down to a feast prepared by the Superintendent. "Institutions" are best investigated on a full stomach.

After the solids, plus a few liquids, had been stowed away, the doctors took up about an hour in "toasting" their distinguished visitors, who, of course, had to consume about as much time and as much more alcohol in toasting the doctors and complimenting them on their fidelity and the highly scientific treatment they were giving their difficult patients. This impressive ceremonial finished, all felt somewhat jocund, intensely benevolent, and, of course, intelligent to a degree beyond comparison.

Everything had been put in shape, and on the surface was immaculate. The doctors trailed along close in the visitors' wake. It being such a big institution, inspection had to be made hurriedly, and some of the visitors doubtless had other engagements for the day. In the laundry, where a score of patients were bent over the ironing boards, one woman lifted her left hand, and chanted in a dreary, toneless voice, as they passed: "The false oath, the false oath!" Some of the visitors apprehensively shivered. Did it fortuitously apply to them? Had they sworn any solemn oaths, either overtly or impliedly, when they had taken office, which they had broken?

Another woman left her place and hurried across the room. In a firm voice, but respectfully, she requested a few words with the visitors. The very

smooth Tokay at luncheon still was tickling their palates, and they did not wish to refuse so decent-looking and respectful a woman, too roughly. They hemmed a little. Finally one said pompously that she must "prefer" her complaint in writing. Then all caught the cue and passed on, in stately dignity.

That woman, poor and ignorant, had not yet learned that her written complaint would be promptly censored in the Superintendent's office, its nature communicated to the assistant physician of the department, and then passed along to the deputies and nurses, at which point on its journey the patient promptly "got what was coming" to him or her. Beautiful, smooth-working system—from the standpoint of Superintendent, resident physician and attendants!

Don, wondering whether the Board of Visitors ever arrived unannounced, was told by Hicks that in such a rare event, they were piloted about the grounds and farm, on the plea that the Superintendent desired them to consider at once a few improvements he would take the liberty of suggesting. Orders meantime were swiftly issued to prepare a "spread" as quickly as possible. Then, while the banquet was on, things inside the institution were hurriedly put in shape, and the farce was played out in the same old way.

All these iniquities of humbug, hideous shams of a sham civilization, throbbed through Don's brain as he walked in Ilex Avenue, Saturday night, and yearned for the sight of Barbara. He felt she must have some information now. His heart bounded, when at last he saw her walking swiftly toward him; but all at once something about her chilled his soul. She looked worn, harassed and tired.

"I have been a long time," she said at once and without a greeting, "and I've failed."

"You mean?" he gasped.

"There's no such person in that department!"

They looked deeply at each other. Don was pale and very grave. He drew her down on a green bench at the end of an intersecting path.

"It means then," he said slowly, "that he has been transferred to some other institution."

Barbara started at the suggestion.

"I know now," continued Don, "that I saw him that night. The more I've pondered it, the surer I've grown. My belief is, they were removing him at the very moment I saw him. Perhaps, they are alarmed or suspicious. I have a friend, a clerk on the Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity, in town, and he has told me that this transference business is an old trick by which they bury a person for life."

"You may be right; you probably are," she answered, "yet my notion is he's been simply removed to some other department. Maybe those who paid for his room stopped their remittances, and——"

The excitement of the new idea brought Don suddenly to his feet.

"I believe that's it, Barbara!" cried he. "Perhaps Winn, Phillips and that lawyer compromised with their consciences to the extent of making him a pay-patient instead of a pauper, and when they grew tired and ceased troubling, they forgot to remit."

He stared into space, his mind concentrated, his hands deep in his pockets. Barbara brought him back, by saying:

"I had to be very cautious and not seem too interested. I made friends with Mr. Nave, and asked a few questions about the pay patients. There doesn't seem to be any Harold Fitzgerald in that department, though he *did* say they'd just gotten rid of a crazy

inventor who'd given them more or less trouble."

"Harold, beyond a doubt!" exclaimed Don with intensity.

"I'm pretty sure of it," she replied. Don was trembling in excitement. She, on the contrary, was very calm, even smiling slightly. "I told you my worst news first—for I've been utterly discouraged. But that is possibly foolish."

"Possibly? Certainly, you mean! But how we are to proceed now, I don't know." He sat down, close to her, as if thus to lessen his perplexity, and both were silent for a moment.

"I think, dear," he said at last, "the time has come to act. We don't know whether he's still here in Allandale, or in another institution; we don't know how long he's been here—and good God!—his reason may in truth be tottering. A man with his temperament, to be robbed of his invention, deserted by his friends, and thrust here, of all places on earth——"

"But Donald," she interposed, "precipitation on our part might result in his enemies taking alarm, and spiriting him away into another state. Since we don't know about him positively, we mustn't take a leap in the dark, dear."

"A leap in the light, perhaps," replied Don with an optimism that would have surprised him, had he had time to reflect on it. "At any rate, Barbara, I'm afraid to wait. I shall notify Dr. Clark right away, and we'll take steps at once for his release. You and I have our hands tied, here. However, my evidence is piling up."

At his words, the old, worn, harassed look deepened in her face.

"I have things to tell you, too," she said wearily, "though the unsupported word of two attendants will

hardly have sufficient weight, I'm afraid——" She paused, then finished abruptly: "I had an hour with Eloise today, and I'm heartsick. My mind was at rest about her. There's a new head-nurse in her ward. Eloise has screamed in her sleep, it seems, the last few nights; she has been nervous and despondent lately, for even her youth can't hold out against Allandale. Anyway, the nurse, on the third night, pulled a strand of her hair out by the roots, and told her she guessed she'd give her something to scream for. And today"—Barbara seemed shaken to the depths of her being—"today the poor child spilled a cup of tea, and the head-nurse struck her so hard that one of Eloise's beautiful front teeth was broken off. She has been slapped in the face repeatedly for asking what they term foolish questions. The girl is growing mutinous as well as despairing, and I am helpless—helpless——"

Barbara hid her face in her hands. Don gently lifted her head, and held her face between his palms.

"Barbara, darling!" he said, desperately, "let's leave it. I can't endure to have you live this horrible life. We can't help anybody in Allandale, while we're here. We've got to get away. I'll set the proper machinery in motion, and we'll have Harold and Eloise and poor old Hicks out of here in no time. Dr. Clark is back of me, you know——" He paused and added quickly, before she had time to speak:

"Barbara, you know I love you! I want to marry you! Do you love me, too—a little? Oh, I want you to!"

He still was holding her face between his palms and looking straight into her eyes. They welled over; and, as the tears fell on his hands, he began staunching them with his handkerchief, speaking with eager inco-

herence, the while. "I'm poorer than the devil, my girl—but I know I can get back on the *Star*—and——"

Barbara let her hand rest passively in his.

"You have a strange effect on me," she answered tremulously. "It's not like me to cry. I've never had time; and when I *did* have, there was a hardness and bitterness that wouldn't let the tears come. And—and—it seems restful to have you love me. I don't want you to stop; but Donald"—she spoke the name with infinite sweetness—"I haven't any right to love you, and I can never marry you, *never!* You don't know anything about me. I——"

Don's face had grown tense and gray.

"Barbara, I need you, simply must have you, girl. *Must*—do you understand?"

Tearless now, but very silent was she. Don went on, fiercely.

"Tell me this: do you love me?" She bowed her head, for all answer. His face grew for an instant radiant; then he asked, fearfully:

"Are you—oh, Barbara, you're not *married?*"

He was hanging on her words, but she had thrust him from her and caught at her breast as if suffocating.

"I'm not married, no, no!" she cried in agony. "But—oh, Donald—you wouldn't love me or ask me to marry you, if you knew——"

She paled; her voice grew strained and harsh. Don's face calmed.

"Do you think so, dear?" he soothed her. "Do you really think so? Listen, darling. Marry me, and your past shall be as if it hadn't ever been. I shall never ask you a question, not one, you understand? God in Heaven, Barbara, *don't* do that!"

His tone was horror-stricken, for in the soft and

fragrant dusk she had sunk at his feet, and had abased her head to his knees. He raised her, held her for a moment in what she felt was a clasp of supreme tenderness.

"No man is ever fit for a woman to kneel to," whispered he. "Least of all am I. How fearfully you must have suffered, darling Barbara, to—to bring you to this utter self-abasement!"

His face, pale in the dimness, was transfigured with a sudden spiritual beauty. "Here, tonight," he said, "we'll forget all that has ever been and start our lives over again. We'll be born anew!"

But she drew herself away from him.

"Listen, listen!" she stammered brokenly, "you don't know; you don't understand! I will write you. I'm far too shaken to tell you now. After you know—then I will listen, if you choose, but—I know how it will be—you'll not want me, then. This is good-bye. That past is a hideous dream. I love you, Donald, and shall always love you. And because I *do* love you, I—I can never—marry you! Oh God!"

"That's all there is to it, then?" Don persisted.

"I can't explain what it was I felt once, for that other man. I thought—God knows—I thought at one time I really did love him. But it couldn't have been so!" She sobbed heart-brokenly. "Why, of course it couldn't; for I love *you*, Donald—you—you only!"

"Who was he? Tell me, Barbara, at once!" cried Don, with a fierce grip on her wrists.

Barbara's eyes flashed with determination.

"Yes, it's your right," she answered, "I was cowardly to try and put this off, or talk of writing it. Let go my wrists, and listen. Your touch unnerves me. I ought to have told you this at the very start,

Don, and not have let you begin to care for me, and go on caring. It wasn't a square deal."

He raised a protesting hand.

"Don't interrupt me!" she commanded. "Let me rush this to the end, while I have strength. I'm sick of deceit and all the pestilent things that spring from it. My life was full of blackness—foulness—till I broke from it like a vile drug habit—and then, and then—met *you!*"

She lingered over the last sentence with a tone of love and pathos that thrilled him to his heart's core. Then she caught herself together again, and continued with even more firmness:

"When I was barely fifteen, my folks—they were very poor—decided I should become a trained nurse. They sent me to the private hospital of—of Sydney Phillips."

"Oh, God!" Don groaned, starting back a little. "That devil?"

"He was a surgeon of note, even then, in the Northwest," Barbara proceeded, unflinchingly. "Strange as it may seem to a man, I had always wanted to be a surgeon from the day in early childhood I mended a doll some charitable neighbor had given me. The work was hard and often shocking to eyes and nerves, but I conquered these repulsions. Lumberjacks from the woods, miners from the camps, herders from the ranges, and sailors from the lakes, with all their dreadful injuries and diseases, were brought to the hospital.

"My training was truly like an ordeal by fire and steel. Dr. Phillips never spares any one who can be useful to him. I grew to be invaluable, almost like a third hand to him. And my ambition burned. I yearned for the time when I could write myself 'P. & S.' But I knew I must have money to achieve my ambition, and

as yet I had earned none. I was only a handy apprentice, not even a wage-slave."

Don's head tossed up at this last word, as if it had been a trumpet-call from Dr. Clark.

"When I was seventeen, he began to take particular note of me, and now and then showed me unexpected small attentions, which I mistook for kindnesses. I was deeply grateful and began to like him very much, to look for his call or his coming every day. How shall I tell of the slow sapping of any moral nature or instincts I may have had? He knew my ambition and played on that. He knew, as a physician, the facile moments even the best girls have, when they do not realize their danger. Unused to kindness, I was half, if not wholly, fascinated by his brilliant personality. I didn't comprehend at first that, in order to realize my dream of a career—word of blight for so many women!—I must pay the price."

"Damn him!" Don muttered, his face livid, both fists clenched hard.

"You must know how black my sin was," Barbara continued. "He was married. That it took months of persistence on his part is nothing to my credit. He had promised to marry me, when his wife, a morphine victim, died. She suspected our relation after a time. He sent me to St. Paul, to get my degree, and later I took up private practice. He insisted on my remaining near. Then one of his eyes was injured, and for a year he had me back in his hospital, secretly performing his most delicate operations. I bungled a very important one. He had made me nervous, and my conscience was beginning to awaken and make me loathe the bond, although I still hoped at times he would sometime marry me."

"Damnation, *no!*" roared Don, like a wounded bull.

"Then, though I had no other man in mind," said Barbara, "I realized such a marriage would be even a fouler sin, and I began to be glad of bitter, gloomy signs on his part. I was becoming irksome. I went to his study one evening over a year ago and told him I was bound to break off my life with him, as if it were a drug-habit. He insulted me grossly, of course. I have earned all sorts of insults. But his dying wife, concealed in the medicine closet to spy on us, came to my rescue from his insolence. She fell. I caught her in my arms and carried her to her room. She spoke forgivingly and encouragingly, and bade me go at once. I stripped off the trinkets he had given me, left them on my dresser, and with money of my own earning took the midnight train for Boston, determined to get as far away from him, and my past, as possible.

"That's my confession, straight as I can make it. Now, Donald, I know you can't want me as your wife. I know I may have the comfort of your respect for my honesty, but I must go at once out of your——"

"Enough! I've heard enough—too much!" he cried hoarsely, roughly. "By God, I *do* want you! I think you're the straightest thing that ever came down the pike. I'm bound to have, and earn you, too!"

Barbara swayed toward him, tears of strange glory blinding her. The next instant his arms were tight about her, and he was holding her so close, close to his leaping heart. Then he relaxed his embrace, very tenderly raised the glorious head that had sunk on his shoulder, and kissed her first upon the forehead.

He bent his face lower, murmuring, "You are my wife, sweet Barbara!" His lips met hers, that melted up to his. When he looked at her face once more, she whispered: "I seem to float in a dream, Donald—or is this Heaven?"

"It's just a beginning, my darling!" he replied, kissing now her hair. "A beginning of the Heaven you can make, if you will, for me!"

"I will!" she promised solemnly.

CHAPTER XXVI

Harold's Long Fight

AS he passed through the corridor, that night, Don found in the mail-rack a bundle of newspapers and a letter, which he opened instantly on reaching his room. It was written in the cipher arranged between Dr. Clark and himself, and translated thus:

"Have received reports by underground. You are doing well. Photograph assaults, if possible, and wait till something startling occurs before leaving, even if you have to exceed the time-limit proposed."

His happy face made a grimace of chagrin at the prospect of being immured many days longer, when he was ardently eager to be out in the world again, making a place for Barbara. Rather irritably he ripped open the bundle of Boston newspapers Dr. George had the thoughtful habit of mailing him twice or thrice a week. Hitherto, he hadn't paid much attention to these. As a newspaper man, long on the inside of the game, he entertained slight respect for the press. Still vexed, he was about to throw them aside, when this announcement caught his eye:

Invention of Calvin Winn. New Machine to Use Power Condensed in Tiny Packages. Big Plant Running Day and Night to Supply Demand. Million for Stockholders. Stock Twice Par and Still Steadily Rising.

Don's blood cooled rapidly as he read the article through. The whole damnable conspiracy was clear. Yes, there was the name of the Hon. Jacob Jackberry, Secretary of the Syndicate; and Phillips was Vice-president. According to the paper, the thing was a wonder, a whirlwind! The power problem of the centuries had been solved. The marvel was both chemical and mechanical. Genius had worked out a way of combining certain common elements of earth, scooped up almost anywhere, into little briquettes of potential power, safer and more certain than electricity. These, brought into contact with a very small machine of intricate device, gave out a tremendous, long-sustained energy. There was no mention of Harold Fitzgerald.

With an oath, Don turned the page. As if the week had not been crammed full enough of tangles, the name of Yetive Soule stared out at him.

The first paragraph of the notice ran thus:

"Married, on Wednesday afternoon, July 26th, at 4 o'clock, in the Empire room of the Stafford Hotel, Yetive Soule and Dr. Sydney Phillips, Rev. John McNary of the First Presbyterian Church officiating."

Don read, with swelling anger:

"Mrs. Phillips is the original of the celebrated picture in the National Art Exhibit held in Boston a few months ago, over which there has been such a furore. The public will be interested to know that 'The Vampire' has been on exhibition in several foreign countries since it was here. It has not only given Henri de Sallier world-wide fame, but has made Yetive Soule (now Mrs. Phillips) a beauty with an international reputation. Dr. Phillips is a distinguished surgeon, who retired some time ago from the practice of his profession, in Minneapolis, to become heavily interested in the already famous and successful Neo-Geo Co. Dr.

and Mrs. Phillips plan to start for the Orient soon, and expect to spend several years traveling slowly through India, Dr. Phillips being still experimentally interested in the chemical properties of rare plants."

Another surprise came to Don next morning—this note from Barbara:

"Donald, are you quite sure you haven't begun to repent your magnanimity?"

He frowned at this, and wrote a reply instantan-

"My Darling! Magnanimity would cease to be such, if it ever repented. In this case there has been none—as yet. You have not heard the story of *my* sins. I shall have to tell you, of course, and crave absolution. Then you, by your sweetness, will teach me to forget them entirely. Meet me, if you can, for a few moments this evening. I have curious news confirming our suspicions beyond a doubt—and I long to be near you! Ever your Don."

Barbara, after reading this note, tucked it into her bosom to companion her through the trials of the day. It made her lover seem very noble. No reference was there to her sins, but only a prayer for pardon. She could almost have prayed that his sins had been redder than blood, so she might revel in the luxury of forgiving him—she who in her humility had felt so deep a need of forgiveness, and yet who, withal, had been so deeply wronged.

That evening it happened both could find only a few minutes' freedom, so they had barely time for an embrace. Don thrust the paper into her hands; and bade her read it and meet him on their next afternoon off—by maneuvering he had contrived to have his day off fall on the same day with hers—near the little

grove on the extreme north end of Allandale farm, to perfect their plans about Harold, Eloise and Hicks.

That tryst seemed, after the fashion of all for which men really yearn, very damnably slow in coming. Don, flat on his back under the shade of a big oak, looking mightily at ease, was inwardly chafing. Barbara was late. What could be detaining her?

He sat up and looked hungrily toward the gray stone building in the distance.

She was coming, walking very swiftly, almost running. Don's heart began to pound. Something was wrong. That hurrying figure showed it subtly to his acute and well-trained eye. She was not simply hastening to her lover. He sprang up and went to meet her, walking nervously himself. She was pale as milk.

"Oh, Don—Don——!" she panted.

He caught her hands and gazed into her agitated face.

"Eloise has killed herself!"

Don stared, aghast.

"She—she's *killed* herself?" he stammered. "How—when?"

He was almost as agitated as Barbara, for he had come to take a personal interest in the girl. A wave of remorse swept over him.

"I've waited too long!" he cried. "I should have acted long ago, and now it's too late. I'm responsible for that poor child's death. Oh, God," he groaned in anguish.

"Hush!" Barbara had regained control of herself. "You couldn't have helped poor Eloise. Dr. Clark knows best. By being too hasty you would have helped nobody. That many may be helped, we must go slowly, even though our hearts break with the waiting.

We mustn't be too deeply grieved even now, heartless as it may appear. There's Harold to think of, and——" but already the tears were rolling down her cheeks and she could not go on.

"How did it happen?" began Don again, reverting to his first questions.

"She hanged herself. It's too terrible for words. They used to say at the hospital," she continued with a wan smile, "that my chief asset was my unshakable poise. It's all gone now. I liked poor little Eloise and it seemed as if she belonged to me, some way——"

She paused. Don waited, reverentially.

"It was a few minutes after I was released from duty. I went to my room to change my uniform. On my way back, the new head-nurse stopped me in the hall to take a message to the attendant in Ward Two. That is Eloise's.

"It was an unusual request, as I am not under her authority. I saw she had been drinking. I hadn't seen Eloise for nearly a week, not since her conflict with the new nurse, and at that time she had been in a mutinous and highly emotional state. As I stood there, a terror seized me, the foreshadow of what was to come. But I told the nurse I'd be glad to go; and I was. It being the quiet hour in the ward, I clung to a hope, in spite of my fearful misgiving, that I might have a word or two, at least a glance, from Eloise.

"I opened the door. The attendant was quietly sitting in a corner near the window, reading a book. This ought to have reassured me, but it didn't. I glanced around the room, my eyes searching for Eloise——" Barbara caught her breath with a sob.

"And then?" ejaculated Don.

"Against the wall something was hanging. At first—the room is big and that wall in shadow—I

thought it was a bundle of clothing; but instantly—I saw. She had made a rope of a sheet and her apron and had hanged herself deftly while the attendant was actually sitting in the room. It seems unbelievable.

“I ran toward Eloise, calling as I ran, ‘Look at your patient!’

“The book dropped. The attendant shrieked: ‘Oh, my God!’ Then she had sense enough to fetch a knife, and we cut her down.

“She fell to the floor like an empty sack. We worked over her—but the doctors said she had done a bad job well.”

“Poor little girl!” said Don. “Poor, poor little girl!”

“The tragedy of it all is that nothing can be done,” went on Barbara, after a minute’s pause. “She’s without friends or kindred to utter a protest, and nobody will ever know that her despair over a living entombment made her kill herself. The word that will go out to the world (if even a whisper of it ever does get past this Bastile) will be that a patient killed herself while suffering from a violent attack of dementia.

“And I had thought Eloise’s youth would sustain her, would help her to hope. Instead, it made her despair the blacker. She was high-spirited and temperamental, and the treatment of last week utterly broke her heart.”

Barbara and Don sat down in the grove. A weariness lay upon them both, and they did not speak for a while.

“I must go back in a few minutes, dearest,” said Barbara finally. “I’m far too shaken, still, to talk or plan things this afternoon, and I feel as if I ought to be near—*her*.”

Ten minutes later, Barbara was taking leave of Don.

He had walked half way to the building with her, and was about to turn toward Ilex Avenue and the south gate. On impulse he had decided to take the train to Boston for a hurried consultation with Dr. Clark, and to return on the evening train.

They stood for a moment watching a score of patients emerge from the north entrance in charge of two attendants. Barbara suddenly started, as her eye travelled down the long line and rested on a slim and graceful, though drooping, figure near the end. At the same instant Don gripped her arm with a pressure that hurt, his breath coming hard.

"It's Harold!" he whispered. "Do you see him?"

"Will he see us—*will* he?" Barbara was murmuring tensely. "Put yourself in his path *some* way—hurry, hurry! It will give him hope and heart, to catch a glimpse of you—*quick!*"

Don left her, speaking no other word. With a supreme effort at unconcern he strolled forward and leaned nonchalantly against a tree. There was just a bare chance the line, in passing, might swerve that way. He had no time to approach closer. His heart leaped, as the line swerved. Would the slender, boyish figure see him, and if he saw, would he recognize?

The line passed. Don sank to the rustic seat nearby, every pulse throbbing. As long as life should last, he was never to forget the look in Harold's eyes, as their glances met.

The wan, drawn face flushed. A stare of wild, incredulous recognition changed on the instant to an indescribable, buoyant look of hope. With all the force of his being, Don had sent, in his own glance, a message pregnant with meaning—and Harold had understood. For just the fraction of a second, Harold had faltered; then he had braced himself and his face

had resumed its pale, impenetrable abstraction. But the electric message had been sent, received and answered.

That moment, when Harold looked into eyes he knew, was the turn of the balance for him. How closely he had grazed madness, he suddenly realized. The contact of their glances had cleared his brain.

For the first time since the hour when that flaming bunch of scarlet salvia had burned itself into his visual memory on the afternoon he had been brought to Allandale, was he now quite sure he was not really mad—sure that the hideous pall laid upon his senses for all those endless months was not reality, and that his dreams were not delusions obsessing him. For, from the hour when he had come to himself within the walls of Allandale, he had not looked upon a face he knew or spoken to anyone who for one moment had assumed he might be sane. Through endless weeks he had weltered in a multitude of primitive and complex emotions, until all definite thought had seemed suspended, and he had sunk into a dull lethargy that rested his numbed brain.

Beyond a certain point the human heart can bear no more; and when the climax of suffering has been reached, there comes anesthesia, while tortured mind and body rest for fresh travail.

After the first awful shock of knowledge that he had been betrayed and was the victim of foul conspiracy, he had taken it very coolly. The memory of that night at Faneuil Hall rose upon him. Dr. Clark had spoken the truth. There was, thank God, at least *one* man in the world who dared to speak it smitingly in all its terrible, naked beauty.

Harold had said to himself at first, that night, the outrages described by Dr. George simply could not be.

Now he knew that such monstrous things *are*. Yet, after the first horror had subsided, he had felt no fear, for his brain had reiterated the simple assertion that such injustice could not persist. For days and days he had repeated these words incessantly, to stay his fainting courage. He would soon find a way out, he told himself!

It had taken him three days to gain access to the Superintendent. The interview dizzied him. Dr. Wilson listened with an abstracted air and soothingly told him he had broken down through overwork; but that he was likely, after a few months of perfect rest and scientific treatment, to be restored to his friends. Dazed, well-nigh stunned, Harold yet was polite enough to thank Dr. Wilson and bow himself out on the arm of the accompanying attendant.

Convinced that Don would take steps to discover his whereabouts, Harold now waited in daily expectancy. Gradually the expectancy dimmed into doubt, doubt darkened into dread, dread blackened into despair. Came then a spell of deadly bitterness. Don had deserted him; he was all alone.

His helplessness for a while enveloped him like an actual thick mist, amid which he dimly discerned other helpless phantom figures drearily moving about. He felt that he must give Don at least one atom of credit: Don had given fair warning, in having confessed himself "a creature of cicatrices and abysses." This odd phrase of his newspaper comrade rang in his head for days, and maddeningly haunted him.

He now nerved himself to envisage his problem at its worst. Jackberry, Winn and Phillips, he now understood, were villains with clear heads, playing a big game charged with dangerous possibilities of detection, exposure, ruin, jail. There was slight possibility that

they had overlooked anything; omitted any precaution to ensure their safety from the moment they had drugged him, as they must have, to secure his incarceration at Allandale.

Later, in torturing moments of bewilderment, he wondered whether Don, too, were not an actor in the hellish plot. Vague suspicions, engendered by his present environment, pressed upon him like a miasma and began to poison his memory. Was Dr. Phillips' arrival in Boston a prearranged affair? Don had admitted knowing Jackberry and Winn, and had spoken of them rather favorably. What had Don been doing in the picture-gallery that day? It looked suspicious. And that woman with Dr. Phillips—Yetive Soule, Don's former wife. It *was* a plot and Don was in it, of course! Why hadn't he seen that at once?

Over and over again, until his heart was a dull pounding hammer and his brain a congealing clod, did he rehearse every event, every word and phrase and look of the past weeks. His father's dying intuition had been true. Dr. Phillips had been his evil genius from the hour the physician had looked upon his invention. In all probability, Dr. Phillips had hastened that loved father's end. He cursed Phillips, and Shively, too—surely a confederate—with incredible bitterness of soul, while the sweat of agony started from his forehead.

Through sleepless nights he wondered about his invention, his imagination following the conspirators through every detail of organization, and seeing them rich and famous. And it was for *this* he had labored, and hoped; for *this* he had dreamed of doing good, of diffusing blessings? At these moments, Harold often stood perilously close to the edge of the cliff, near the maelstrom.

Came intervals of calm, when he reasoned coldly and in a detached way, as if the things that had happened to Harold Fitzgerald were no concern of his. He wondered, then, why he had confused Dr. Martin Winn with his brother Calvin. He saw things clearly now—the drugged wine, the after-draught that had apparently cleared his brain, only to confuse it more subtly; and that hour before the probate judge, wherein he had been convicted out of his own mouth. This part his reflection could not quite clear up. Just what he had said, in the jumble of his senses, he could not recall. But some high-flown prophecy, some boast about his invention he had the impression of having uttered. Of course, the judge had been prepared for a madman's visit and had probably been quite innocent. . . . That noble characteristic of this boy's mind—his aim to be absolutely just—had not yet been eaten out by the air of the madhouse.

At other times he wondered about matters at home; who was occupying his house; what had become of his letters; and whether there had been any inquiries for him at the Boston apartment by acquaintances he had casually made. Was it possible that one could disappear from the face of the earth like this and never a question be asked? Possible that he who had hoped to be a savior, an emancipator, had filled so small a niche in the throbbing, teeming world outside, that his personality could be obliterated, blotted out, wiped away as if he had been a mannikin on a slate?

With thoughts like these he travailed until he lost count of the days, and bodily prostration held him down. There had come, too, days of physical revolt—but not at first. Some mental misery is so acute that for a long time it does not sense the physical environment; the body mechanically lives on.

Autumn waned, and the short, bleak days of winter came, that were to leave their imprint on his soul forever. Hour after hour he stared steadily out at the whirling, eddying snow until a numb, paralyzing stupor crept over him.

If only, he said to himself in agony, if only he had something tangible opposing him, something concretely aggressive and formidable, he could gird himself for the struggle—but this nothingness, this sinister white silence, was as if he had tried to catch at snowflakes that sifted through his fingers.

Then, long weeks his own temperament came to be his worst enemy. That melancholy strain of North Ireland in his blood, the dreaming, sensitive, mystic strain, very nearly did the business that Jackberry had calculated it would; well-nigh unhinged his reason. The thwarting of his hopes, the theft of his invention, the thing dearest in life to him, caused moods of burning, fevered revolt. And these, with fits of apathy alternately engendered by his racial strain of melancholy, brought him to a physical state close on collapse.

But the canny Scandinavian side of him put up a magnificent fight. It counseled caution and patience; and then his blood cooled and his brain ceased its terrible throbbing, so that sometimes there were weeks when despair was wholly routed.

During one of these intervals he planned systematic exercise to keep him in physical trim, and devised mental gymnastics as well; and he unobtrusively studied the men and women about him, found out all he could of the institution and its particular system, and observed officials and attendants so well that the conclusions he drew were fairly accurate. For a while he thought nothing in particular of the fact that he was

a pay-patient and had a fairly comfortable room, with decent food. It did not occur to him that his lot was better than any of the others; for, during the earlier weeks, when he was holding at bay that dread foe, madness, a-crouch—a tiger fain to spring—his introspection had been too compellent to permit his taking note of things external. But presently he discovered he was a more or less privileged character, like all the pay-patients.

Evidently Jackberry—he felt sure the lawyer had been the actual instigator of every move—had felt compelled to make some sort of compromise in the matter, for he hadn't quite dared to cast him utterly upon the mercies of the State. Then he began to speculate whether his having property in Minneapolis might not affect his legal status in Massachusetts, and how, under the circumstances, he could have been committed to an institution of an alien state. There seemed a screw loose here, which might be tightened on them when he should have escaped and begun his attack.

At any rate, whatever story the conspirators had concocted, they had so far done their work well. Not a scrap of information was obtainable from any source. His was an absolute isolation.

During the long period when he fought despair successfully, he took notes. Most of the male nurses had come from the logging camps of the north country, where they had been under rigid and often cruel dominion. They were ignorant, vicious, bigoted, superstitious. They gloried in their newly-acquired power and their uniforms. These latter, Harold saw, seemed in the eyes of these brutes to confer an actual power and authority upon them, which they took a childish delight in exercising. They ate enormously, and got drunk as often as they dared. Then they became bes-

tial demons, finding in the Asylum secure means of gratifying every instinct of brutality and lust.

He had less opportunity, of course, for observing the women attendants. Often they were of the same type—large of stature, well-built, very strong, and coarse. He was quick to see their superiority to the men in intelligence; yet they, too, looked upon their charges as worthless paupers; and the idea that these people, or most of them, had any rights they were bound to respect, never seemed to enter into their calculations at all. It shocked him to discover that some of these women seemed to have the natures of wolves. When a woman is a beast, he sorrowfully concluded, she sinks to far fouler bestiality than any man.

While Harold was thus fighting for reason in Allandale, half a dozen female attendants resigned, at varying intervals. This he had been sure would happen, for they had been of the honest, humane, sympathetic type, and had been unable to endure the cruel conditions and soul-suffocating environment.

In charge of his department, after Harold had been there some months, was placed a man named Fuller, who soon manifested intense antagonism toward him. Harold had shown resentment of several unwarranted familiarities, which had probably been meant as overtures, he realized afterwards, but which his rasped nerves protested against; and, as often happens in the case of a petty nature, this aroused in Fuller a spitefulness that vented itself on Harold in a score of ways.

These exasperations gathered cumulative force until one day Harold seized the attendant, shook him violently, as a terrier does a rat, and then dropped him in a heap outside the door, thoroughly terrified. From that hour, life was made a burden to him. A few

moments after his outburst he bitterly regretted it, for one of the warnings frequently given him by a friendly patient, to whom in his desperate loneliness he had told his life, was that of unquestioning obedience and patience.

"If you keep on that tack long enough, they'll parole you some time. It's the only chance of salvation!" this friend had said.

For days he now lived in hourly dread he would be sent to the violent ward, a fate with which the attendant frequently threatened him. Sometimes, in these vicious institutions, the threat is to send the patient to a worse place. At Danvers, for instance, they threaten a poor devil with Tewksbury, an Augean inferno, if ever one existed on earth. Harold, therefore, became very cautious. Month drifted into month in an endless, hopeless routine, and thought, reason, reflection stagnated.

Then, suddenly, he was conscious of a radical change in the manner of his attendant. Where formerly Fuller had been more subtly antagonistic, he now became openly insulting. But Harold bore it in silence. How long he would have done so remains a question; for one evening, after two weeks of it, when his nerves were strained to the snapping-point, a crisis came, as he stood looking out of the window after supper. The arching trees, with the sun sinking behind them, seemed like some dim yet gorgeous temple. At this very moment he fancied that he glimpsed a face below, vaguely familiar.

So absorbed was he in this momentary fancy that he did not hear Fuller enter the room and call him. He was jerked from the window roughly, and told to follow. Every drop of blood in Harold's body boiled; but his angry protest remained unuttered in astonish-

ment, for a servant was with the attendant, and was gathering Harold's belongings together. One second, his heart leaped ecstatically. Was he about to be released?

That wild hope was smothered the next moment, as Fuller laughed with a sneer that made him wince.

"What does it mean?" snarled Fuller, answering his question. "It means that you ain't a pay-patient no more. Your backers"—grinning—"have just forgotten to come across, that's all. And you're a sure-enough pauper, now, to put it polite-like. You'll have more society, anyhow—which you'll enjoy. You're such a damn sociable cuss, you know!"

The repulsing of Fuller's overtures was yet rankling overtime.

In the next interval of his adjustment, Harold thought he must surely be going insane. How else had he got the impression that he had seen Don on the night of his transfer? It had been but the shadowiest sort of an impression, but it had long persisted.

Now the physical side of Harold set up its revolt. He found himself compelled to endure existence in a big ward. Every sense of privacy was outraged, all notions of decency mocked at. The food was nauseating. He found he must gather every faculty of his being together to resist the foe ambushed in some dark cell of his brain. The soul of him steadied and braced him for a long time, and he held the thing off, and believed it conquered.

But sometimes at night, in the utter darkness, it would still be there. It would creep slowly; creep close; this thing that would not strike and end his agony, but that waited, biding its time in the darkness, until—until——

Next ensued a period when the machinery of his

mind seemed rusted and clogged from long disuse; a period when he refused to think; when he ate and drank and slept mechanically, and stared into space in the intervals—and the Foe crept near as a hair's breadth.

Things that he daily saw made him marvel he *could* see them and bear to live; yet he lived. There came days when a sinister voice within him reiterated incessantly, there was *no* hope; that he, Harold Fitzgerald, was eternally lost and forgotten in these hideous stews of horror. And all the time each physical sense was desecrated by the foul stench of putrid food, with drugs and sweat commingled.

Presently it seemed to him as if there were exhalations—like a pestilent mist from a dank swamp full of reptiles—from these disordered minds; and that these exhalations took on tangible, grotesque shapes, as if witches had been let loose and were holding a Sabbath in the night. Always, too, was that other horror—that shapeless, invisible foe creeping close in the hellish silences or the more hellish noises of the night.

Yet in the midmost reek of all this foulness and awful blackness of mind, always a cool, shadowy hand was laid in compassion on his torment; and over and over again he was saved from the brink. And with the gush of tears the cool hand brought, he felt his mother had been near her boy. After this, the mysterious reaction would invariably come, when his chin would lift itself, and his lips take a firmer curve and hope again resurrect itself. So had it been the night before the day when he had looked into Don's eyes, on the march of his "gang"—and had known that help was at hand. How the blood sang through his veins! Yet he steeled his face into a glacial vacuity, lest the guard suspect and he be "transferred" again.

He laid him down to sleep that night, unknowing, as

yet, that ineffaceable things had been traced upon his heart and brain, and that the mysterious essence of youth — that magical something — was gone forever from his soul.

CHAPTER XXVII

Tragedy

THE day after the silent recognition between Don and Harold, Barbara found herself nervously aware of some impending trouble in her ward. The air was heavily charged with it, although nothing had been actually said or done to give shape to her suspicion. But the flushed face of Margaret King, the ward manager, and her air of particular irritability, had always been forerunners of trouble. She stayed in the ward much more than usual; and while she said nothing in particular to Mrs. Johns, her pet victim, she looked at her with unusual venom, again and again, until Barbara was forced to conclude Miss King was aching for a fray.

Barbara had gathered something of this woman's vicious history, and knew she drank. This, with her unnatural sexual nature, which found abnormal gratification in doing physical violence, explained some of the ferocity she put into the discipline of her ward.

Hearing that Miss King's native state was California, Barbara had told her that old Mrs. Johns also came from the California coast, with a faint hope that even the slight bond of state nativity might avert a little of the cruelty Miss King seemed always ready to vent on the sturdy old woman. Barbara and the ward manager as yet, although close to angry disagreement several times, had come into no conflict, and Barbara fervently hoped none might be precipitated.

She noted that Miss King, when next in the ward, was looking at the old crone with keen animosity.

"How are you feeling today?" she finally asked the aged woman. "All right?"

Unfortunately Mrs. Johns had been in a despondent, irritable mood, and she sullenly failed to respond. This clearly incited Miss King to secret fury, and it now looked to Barbara as if the tyrant were only waiting opportunity to expend her rage.

The opportunity came, next day. It was near the supper hour, and an attendant was preparing the table. Around the ward was evidence of some little cheerfulness, the cheerfulness that associates itself the world over with the preparation of a meal. The afternoon sunshine through the barred windows was making fantastic patterns on the floor. One poor creature was carefully measuring the bars of sunlight with her shoe, and then making rapid figures with her fingers in the air, like a game of golden numbers.

Fragrance drifted through the open windows. There was a cheerful rattle of tin cups at the table. Miss King abruptly entered the ward. Barbara felt the instant damper laid on every patient, for the cheerful noises and the talk subsided.

Mrs. Johns was holding a glass of water to her lips. What Miss King's errand into the ward was, no one ever was to know, but she approached Mrs. Johns as if having business with her. The nurse's cheeks were flushed and her eyes glittered. Obviously she had been drinking.

Mrs. Johns nervously lowered the glass as the nurse approached, and then, as ill luck would have it, out of her hand it slipped and fell at Miss King's feet. The water spilled on her shoes and the glass broke into a thousand pieces. Instantly seven devils were let loose.

Miss King grabbed the old woman by the hair and almost lifted her from her feet. For a moment Mrs. Johns hung back, less aggressive than usual; then gathered herself eagerly, and both gave battle without fear of hurt or pain.

To every trembling, fascinated spectator in the room, it looked like a fight between two wild beasts. Each writhed and strained to reach the other's throat. They snarled, scratched, twisted and bit; and twice they fell upon each other on the slippery floor, first one on top, then the other. They rushed at each other, pushing and slamming against tables and chairs. Barbara, unable to endure the dreadful sight and fearing the result, ran swiftly through the door into the corridor and called through the speaking-tube, for help.

The struggle went on. The old woman found herself weakening, her feet slipping. She made a frantic clutch at Miss King's throat, missed, and caught the woman's shirtwaist, holding on with mad strength. The waist ripped, and came away in her hands, bringing the shift of gauze with it, and laying bare the nurse's breasts. Mrs. Johns' eyes blazed as they rested on a crimson and palpitating birthmark; and on the instant a note in her scream revealed that her reason, for a moment at least, had returned:

"Margaret—my Margaret!"

Miss King released her hold and stared panting at the dishevelled, frightful, lacerated woman before her, in whose eyes, nevertheless, the light of reason shone. Apparently the old woman was trying to bare her own bosom. She stretched her arms, tottered, and her cheeks grew chalky; then she fell heavily to the floor.

For a second Margaret King stood mute, staring at the body on the floor. Then she stooped, panting, and tore open the cheap waist of the dead woman.

She saw a crimson mark on the sunken breast, matching exactly that on her own bosom.

With a shriek that penetrated to every corner of that wing, she screamed: "*Oh Christ, oh Christ—I've murdered my mother!*"

Without pause or hesitation she sprang forward toward the dining-table where the attendant, cutting bread, still sat transfixed by the horrible spectacle. Snatching the bread-knife, she plunged it to the hilt into her neck. She coughed once or twice. A gush of blood spattered everyone within a dozen feet of her. Turning, she reeled toward her mother and fell dead, across her body, just as Barbara, with two orderlies and an assistant, burst into the ward.

Now, to crush out the life of an insane person is common enough in asylums, and nurses and attendants are loath to report it. In the large institutions it is of alarmingly frequent occurrence. But at Allandale this double tragedy was out of the usual order. Some other explanation than "patients fighting among themselves" would be necessary to meet inquiry.

Word of the tragedy soon reached the administration office, and Dr. Wilson, followed by physicians, orderlies and deputies, was on the spot inside of a very few minutes.

The ward was in an uproar. Hell had broken loose. Patients were cursing, laughing, sobbing, shrieking. Some were singing obscene songs, and some lifting hymns. Others were running madly round and round. A few were spinning themselves like tops and humming. With difficulty the Superintendent brought them to silence, and as soon as he had restored order, called Barbara and several other witnesses to the office. The young assistants and the orderlies lifted the bodies and deposited them upon wheel tables, pending

their removal to the morgue.

Barbara was greatly moved, but she gave a graphic story of Miss King's antagonism and cruelty to Mrs. Johns from the time of the former's installation as ward-manager, to the moment that she, Barbara, had run for help. She had not seen the actual deaths; or even suspected the ghastly relationship, till her arrival with the orderlies.

The attendant who had been preparing the evening meal next gave her account of the tragedy, and several others testified, all descriptions varying somewhat, of course, but mainly cohering. Dr. Wilson looked not only horror-stricken but confounded. Tales of inhumanity had been brought to his attention time and again by nurses and by patients, and by complaints of kindred or friends of the latter. But he had become indifferent. The patients were dead to the world anyway. Why should he worry about a few hundred helpless, demented creatures, the majority of whom were without kin, friends or influence? Even suicide, which had been frequent, he had always managed to hush up. But he uneasily reflected that there had been too many eye-witnesses to this episode. Could they all be silenced?

After a rigid examination of the four whose testimony could be considered reliable, he begged of them, for his own sake and that of the institution, to refrain from whispering even a word of the affair. He hinted at shorter hours, an advance in salary and a special letter of recommendation with each diploma; then dismissed them with an assured good-night, satisfied that no inquest would be necessary.

Later Barbara was to learn that the old woman's pass to Potter's Field had been signed "heart-failure" and the daughter's death accounted for by "internal

hemorrhage." The mother was buried at the expense of the state. A white pine box, with an express-wagon for a hearse, sufficed. She was buried without prayer.

The funeral services of the nurse were held in Allandale chapel. A floral wreath from the doctors lay upon the closed casket, and two carriages followed the body to its lonely grave in Mount Auburn. The treasury of the Asylum was ordered to pay all expenses, and charge them up to the Commonwealth.

Thus the grave finally hid another tragedy of Allandale—one more, of God knows how many in that place of unspeakable horrors.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Battle of the Bathroom

THE thing Harold had dreaded so long and which, had it happened a month before, would surely have unhinged his reason, had come to pass—he found himself committed to the violent ward, and knew that ere long he was to be immured with raving maniacs. But though he looked, for a brief space, down deep into the black gulf of despair, hope speedily lifted him out again. Friends knew now that he was here; his deliverance would be only a matter of time. He must “possess his soul in patience”; for he knew not what difficulties must be overcome or what obstacles there were to hinder Don. By this time Harold had come to know something of the wheels within wheels that must be turned before the doors of Allandale should give up the quick who are dead.

That very reaction from settled melancholy to radiant hope which Don’s recognition of him had wrought, brought about Harold’s transference to that Gehenna of horrors—the violent ward. In the first place, the dogged patience, the unfaltering belief in himself which had made him refuse to admit that discouragement or defeat were actualities during those years he hung over his invention, were no longer his to command at will. They had vanished with that subtle essence of youth which Allandale had filched from him, forever. Now a thousand doubts harassed him; a thousand suspicions tormented.

Not at first, however. For a week he waited hopefully, expectantly. The second week his heart sank a little; he had been vouchsafed neither sight of Don nor word from him. And when the third week was nearly at an end, with still no word or sign, he began to think the brief encounter on the walk that day might be a fever, after all, a madman's phantasy; and the old horror again surged over him that he was, in truth, losing his senses. So he had to fight the fearful battle all over again. The buoyancy of the first week had left him, as a toy balloon goes flat. He became acutely conscious of the revolting conditions around him; the change from the "paid quarters" to a general ward was very marked, and all these things told on his physical vitality. His nerves took on a keen edge, and in the beginning of the third week he rebelled, by refusing to eat a nasty-looking bowl of soup. The soup at these institutions is frequently made, not by a decent, sane cook, but by half-witted patients working in the kitchen. Buttons, pieces of combs, bits of bar soap and roaches are often thrown in as fancy flavorings to the putrid meat.

Harold's daintiness in refusing the foul mess enraged the attendant, and he reproved the "God damned pauper" in terms even grosser than the soup, but Harold had sense enough to keep still. He had learned, at bitter cost, that silence and submissions are the only possible means with which to win such indulgence as one may hope to get in Bastiles like Allandale. But that petty malice and vigilant vindictiveness which seemed to animate the average attendant in asylums, had been aroused in the ward nurse, and the next two days grew absolutely unbearable.

On Thursday an outrage occurred in his presence, so horrible as to be unprintable. Every instinct in

Harold rose into open, fierce rebellion, and without thought of himself or fear of consequences he interfered, protesting vehemently and threatening to report the filthy infamy. Calling him the vilest names in the dictionary of blackguarding, the attendant struck him heavily athwart the jaw. He struck back, and in a moment was punching the tyrant for the joy of the thing—the primitive lust of battle. Another attendant intervened, while the status was about even; and the pair of them subdued him.

For the rest of the day and all of Friday, an ominous hush pervaded the ward. The attendant was painfully polite to Harold; and not till Saturday morning, when he came on duty, did his manner change. Harold's heart sank heavily. He knew what was about to happen. At Saturday noon two attendants, a strait-jacket suggestively dangled by one, motioned him out of the ward.

In frightful agony lest it be clapped on him, he followed, mute and helpless. His formal transference to Ward B, where the most violent of all were kept, was duly made. The first person he looked on, when he entered this Inferno, was Don.

Don was talking to the Protestant clergyman—it was the day the latter "comedian" made his weekly visit. The dominie was asking a question about one of the patients who had actually appeared to excite his interest, but at sight of a new patient Don stepped forward and his eyes met Harold's. In spite of himself, horror leaped to his face; then he instantly regained self-possession, and, for the second time, shot a warning into his friend's eyes. He drew a breath of relief when Harold's impassivity of look showed that he understood.

Half an hour later, Don snatched a moment when

the ward was clear of other attendants and of the clergyman and Spear, the deputy, to speak to Harold, the first word uttered between them, since they had parted outside the Art Studio ten months before.

"Courage—just a few days longer, Hal!" he said guardedly. "I mustn't be seen talking to you more than half a minute."

At the short, familiar "Hal" on Don's lips, and the sweet sound of the only voice he knew now was the voice of a real friend, Harold's composure nearly deserted him. He wanted nothing in the world so much as to lay his aching head on Don's broad shoulder and sob his heart out. His fine features were distorted by the effort to restrain the dammed-up torrents of feeling that struggled to run free at last. But in a moment he had choked back the sob in his throat once more and was Captain of his Soul.

"How did you—know—I was here?" He spoke in a very low tone.

"I didn't know," answered Don, glancing around the madhouse room, a Bedlam of stench, shrieks and horror. "I only found it out after I came here. Supposed you were in Europe—that's what Jackberry told me——"

Harold's eyes blazed.

"I'm here for Dr. Clark," Don continued, hurriedly, "investigating Allandale. Thank God I came! I've been here nearly seven weeks—intended to be only a month. I've done my best to get word to you, but it was no go, and I've worried my head off. The climax we've been waiting for is in the air; it may happen any minute. When the explosion comes, you'll walk out with the rest. Keep still—there's Spear! He's a fiend!"

Don was hustled off, as the hatchet-faced deputy

came along and arrested him with a question:

"How's Morrill?"

Don glanced over at the stertorous patient in question, a new inmate.

"He's slept nearly eleven hours," he answered briefly.

Spears grinned.

"Had his bath yet?"

Don held himself in.

"Of course not; he was brought in close to midnight in an auto—on the verge of jim-jams. To tell the truth, Mr. Spear, he's a subject for the hospital; he doesn't belong here at all. When he wakes up, he'll be as sane as anybody."

Spear malignly scowled, his thin lips compressing themselves into a cruel line.

"Well, if he isn't sane we will bring him to his wits quick enough!" he snarled. "We don't want any bug-house oratory around here, not when it ain't necessary—see? Was he doped?"

Don gave a curt nod.

"Goddard was on duty. You may be sure Morrill got his hypodermic all right!"

Spear, with a grin of devilish affability, next inquired:

"How's Hicks been behaving lately?"

"Hicks is doing fine!" said Don, warmly.

This clearly did not fill Spear's heart with ecstasy, but he said nothing. When he had taken his hateful presence out of the ward, Don walked over to take a fresh look at Morrill, and make a study of the man.

Morrill was about the same build as Hicks, but, in spite of the marks of dissipation upon him, of a higher type of mentality. Something about him bespoke culture and refinement. He had been, to all appear-

ances, violently insane the night before, Goddard had told Don. Whiskey had been back of it, of course. Morrill had sat on the edge of the bed, refusing to lie down, for hours. First he had raved in an agony of fear. Then he had had a lucid interval or two, and called beseechingly for a doctor. Hicks had tried to soothe him, for the drugs they had injected into Morrill during the night had, of course, aggravated the frightful condition of his brain and nerves. He had passed through that period of drunkenness, when alcohol or drugs, unless pushed to a dangerous point, have no effect. His stomach was crying for nourishment and his mind needed rest; his body a soothing, relaxing massage.

Toward morning, Goddard had cursed him roundly and told him to shut up or be gagged. Almost instantly, to the surprise of that worthy husky and of every tormented patient in the ward, Morrill suddenly had become oblivious of everything, and lying down, had fallen into a profound slumber which had lasted eleven hours.

Now, even as Don approached, Morrill awoke. His mind seemed clear, his eyes were rational and his muscles under perfect control.

"I'm hungry as a wolf!" he growled, sitting up in bed. His first words had voiced the need of a famished body.

Presently, when Don had gone to order some food for him, Morrill looked about him, bewildered, his mind beginning to take notes on himself. His environment and the patients puzzled him. Seeing that Hicks had a friendly eye, he beckoned.

"In the name of the living Christ, where am I? In the bug-house?"

Hicks nodded.

"My God! Have I come to *this*?"

Morrill's tone was full of unspeakable horror. Hicks essayed comfort, but for five minutes the man sat silent and ashen-faced. Presently he asked: "What asylum?"

"Allandale, in Winchester," answered Hicks.

"My own town! I must have been in a bad way for my relatives to consent to my being admitted to this place. You appear sane. How long have you been here?"

"Three months."

"What? Three months in this Hell-hole?"

"No. Only one month in this violent ward, but it seems a life-time."

"But *you're* not insane!" Morrill's tone was wondering.

"No. I shall prove it when the time comes. I've got word to my sister, or tried to. I expect to get out of here soon."

"Suppose you don't?"

"I'm damned sure I'll get out!" cried Hicks.

"Are you a boozier?"

Morrill awaited the answer with a certain eagerness.

"Not to any extent. Are you?"

"Yes, and no. I belong to that class of drunkards who booze, not because they like the infernal stuff, but because they must."

"Oh, come, now," protested Hicks, "do you mean to say that a man must drink and can't possibly resist?"

"Yes, I do. Do you know what a dipsomaniac is?"

"Yes. A hard drinker. Isn't that it?"

An expression of sadness, bitterness and unutterable melancholy stole over Morrill's face.

"Yes, it's to drink and get drunk; and to drink

and keep drunk till you sink below the level of a beast. God forbid that you should ever be so accursed! It may be that only a few minutes before the thing happens, you appear to be in an ideal physical, mental and moral condition. You may be prosperous, content, happy, buoyant. Then, without warning, the craving for alcohol comes over you, and you have no soul—only a thirst-maddened body. I——”

“Shut up, over there, you!”—suddenly roared Fales, the supervising day-attendant, “or I’ll make you!” They had not seen him enter.

“Oh, is that so?” Morrill’s tone was easy and assured. He sat up on the bed and laughed at the attendant. “Now, if you’re looking for trouble, you know, why, come right over here! I’d like to work off some surplus energy on a cur like you!”

Fales rushed to the bed, as if he would annihilate his new charge, and Morrill sprang to his feet. At that the attendant recoiled instinctively, for Morrill looked formidable. Cowardice, fear, hate, showed itself in the attendant’s face. He slunk away, muttering something about getting him ready for his bath, and left the ward. Hicks knew how to interpret that.

“I’m afraid, Morrill,” he said anxiously, “you’ll get what they’ve been itching to give *me* for some days past, and haven’t yet found an excuse for. They never work overtime here, or you’d have been soused in the bath-tub last night. Take my advice, and get into that tub, no matter how dirty it looks. You say that you can get out of here as soon as your folks hear you’re in your right senses again. These beggars won’t believe you here; so don’t give them a chance to pitch into you. Submit, Morrill—they’re too many for you. I put up a fight, and they sent me to bed

for two weeks!"

While they were still talking, Spear came in and called Don, giving him instructions.

"You'll see now how we handle unruly paupers at Allandale," he said, grinning. "Hicks has been lamb-like, so we've postponed going after him. The cuss must be going to pass in his checks. He was an unruly devil, at first. But this Morrill will be as good an object-lesson as Hicks. It'll be right after supper. Where do you hang out in the evening?"

"I'll be on the grounds, near the south gate. Don't fail to send for me."

"Oh, we won't need none o' your help, you know. You're to keep your hands off. Fales and Whitman are dandy scrappers, and I'm no slouch myself. Morrill is a hard boozier. They don't last long in a scrap; their wind gives out and then it's easy!"

"He may have friends—relatives——"

Spear grunted derisively.

"He was picked up on the streets. That kind ain't got no friends who care. I don't know who committed him—and I don't give a damn!"

"He looks as if he could fight." Don's tone was purposely dubious.

"Fight nothing!—we'll have him to the bad in ten minutes. You keep away from him; and say, don't know too much. Tomorrow the doctor will ask what makes his mug so pretty. I'll attend to *that*, all right."

All during the rest of that interminable afternoon, Don visualized the picture of three attendants mauling a naked man in a bathroom. This would be all the necessary evidence required. He had gone into Boston just once in the time he had been in Allandale; and that had been immediately after his meeting Har-

old on the walk.

Dr. George had listened in keenest interest, but had said at once that no decisive step could be taken, until Don had obtained more damning evidence against the institution. The suicide of Eloise was nothing actually incriminating against Allandale. Patients frequently took their own lives. The death and suicide of Mrs. Johns and Margaret King could be glossed over. Harold's release would be a matter of several weeks' delay, since indisputable evidence must be produced that he had been shut up in a mad-house by a band of conspirators who hoped to profit through an invention of his.

The men who had turned this trick were undoubtedly diabolically clever. They had more than probably covered their tracks well. Don must hang on a while longer; his opportunity would come. So said the Doctor, then equipped Don with a pocket kodak and sent one to Barbara, with instructions to get a picture of any assault that took place—and to hazard much in order to get such pictures. Meantime he, Dr. George, would take, through an honest lawyer, steps toward the release of Harold.

Don had noted, at this interview, that Dr. George himself was looking somewhat harassed and worn; and when he had ventured very respectfully to ask the cause, Clark had told him briefly that his activity in connection with recent exposures, which had been made of Massachusetts prison conditions, had brought venom upon him from high quarters, and that he was being made to pay for his probings; that pressure was being brought to bear upon him in a hundred unexpected ways, and that even the secret influence of a great church had been invoked against him to ruin his practice.

But Dr. George had closed with a bright smile: "The damned knaves, humbugs, hypocrites are fools; they don't know me, Don, my son. I've only begun to fight!" said he.

As the supper-hour approached, Don reviewed the situation rapidly. If the assault did take place, a picture of it and his own and Hicks' testimony would be sufficient corroboration. Hicks told a straight story. Moreover, he was complaining of his side, and the symptoms indicated a broken rib or two. An X-ray examination would undoubtedly disclose fractured ribs. He had entered the hospital with a mastoid abscess and would receive his discharge with marks of bodily injuries. The Asylum officials might be able to explain these away glibly. Yet, in days gone by, an ugly cloud had hung over this institution; and it was only a question of time before the usual star-chamber investigations must give way to a rigid public scrutiny of this Hell in all its methods, from the system of commitments to the diabolical condition of its violent-wards and the foulness of its kitchen. Don felt a conviction that tonight's work would prove the climax which would swing wide open the doors of Al-landale for Harold, for Hicks, for Barbara and others. Poor Eloise had opened the doors for herself.

Hicks was nervous and apprehensive, when Don went off duty at six o'clock. The latter had spoken a few cautious words to Harold before leaving:

"Keep your eyes open, old man. There'll be something doing tonight, sure as guns; and tomorrow may mean release!"

He had gone swiftly. Hicks was hanging around Morrill's bed.

"I'll not go into the damned bath!" declared Morrill.

"Oh, yes, you will," nervously said Hicks.

"You don't know me!" Morrill's face was grim.

"Then insist in keeping your pants and shoes on," advised Hicks. "I'll give you my belt to hold them up."

"That day-nurse doesn't look like a bad fellow?" said Morrill tentatively.

"Oh, Brush? *He's* all right!" Hicks assured him.

"Still, if they send for him," Morrill went on, "he'll pitch in with them, and he looks as if he could do some pretty good work, himself. I'd like to know just what I'll be up against.

"Oh, Spear and Fales won't need to call on him. Even if they do, he'll probably join in a half-hearted way for the sake of appearances——"

"Well, I haven't much to live for anyway; but, if I go to the morgue, somebody will go with me, and the others will need a surgeon!" Morrill growled derisively.

At seven o'clock, the alternate night-nurse—Godard was not on duty tonight—approached the bed. Morrill's eyes were closed. He was pretending sleep. The attendant shook him and told him he hadn't had a bath, and that it was against the rules of the institution to put a patient to bed without one, if he was well enough to be dressed.

"Hurry up, the water's ready!" he jerked at Morrill impatiently.

"All right. I'll be in my pants and shoes in a jiffy."

"You don't need those. Here are some shoes, and the bathroom is near."

"Who's going to take this bath—you or I?"

Morrill looked ferocious, and the attendant's impatience subdued itself. Morrill slipped on his trousers, pushed his nightshirt inside, gave the belt an extra

pull and tightened his shoe-lacings to the limit. Then he followed his attendant to the bathroom. In it, Spear, Fales and Goddard were eagerly waiting, lusting for battle. Don was there also. Morrill gazed at them in pretended astonishment. The ward nurse left the room, closing the door. The victim looked into the tub, then turned to the others with a smile.

"Do you really expect me to get into that cess-pool?" demanded he. "Moreover, I'm not in the habit of undressing in the presence of strangers!"

A chorus of guffaws greeted this. Then, with an oath, Fales cried: "Take off those clothes and get into that tub, and be damned quick about it, too, you——!"

Morrill pulled off his nightshirt and again tightened his belt; then stood with folded arms and head thrown back. "Suppose I don't?" he asked.

The contempt in his voice and the defiance in his eyes took them by surprise. Instinctively they retreated a little. This gave Morrill a chance to get his back to the wall. He knew his adversaries for the cowards they were now, and it gave him confidence. With the exception of Brush, the three trained nurses looked like treacherous panthers ready to spring—to strangle, claw and crush into insensibility their over-matched charge. As he shot a swift glance from face to face, Morrill thought he caught a friendly look in the eyes of Brush. The eyes of the others looked black and snapping, wide open, hungry with a wolfish lust for combat.

"And so it takes four of you to give me a bath?" he taunted. "You scum of the backwoods of Canada—takes four Canucks to bathe one Yank! I'll see you in Hell and damned, before I'll get into that pest-hole, though it's clean enough for *your* dirty hides,

God knows!"

He looked into each face with a calm, inviting defiance that showed the three attendants they had no ordinary man to deal with. A fight to the finish was obviously on their hands. Again Morrill noted a look of kindness and sympathy in the face of Brush. It puzzled him.

"I'm ready," he said coolly. "And I'm quite aware that you brought me in here to do me up. Come on, you——!"

The three nurses crouched within striking distance, like wild beasts. Their plan was to spring on him simultaneously, with blows on face, neck and solar-plexus, and then throw him into the tub. A sign from Spear, and the triple attack was on.

Cooler, quicker, more alert and with equal velocity, Morrill's right smashed Goddard below the heart. He fell into the arms of Brush, his face twisted in anguish. Spear's long left caught his victim on the shoulder, but the blow glanced, losing much of its force.

Now, as Fales' enormous fist drove home on Morrill's upper ribs, he held his breath. The concussion would have been terrible, had he not been about a foot from the wall. Goddard had now recovered his strength and had got to his feet again. With a snarl he turned to Brush. "What in Hell are *you* doing?" demanded he.

"Why, I caught you just in time to save you from a bath!"

Don said this with such coolness that for a moment operations ceased and the three glared at him, cursing him for his seeming cowardice and unwillingness to take part in this unequal combat. Spear had quite forgotten that he had told Don to keep out

of it.

"By God!" he roared, "did you come here to referee a fight?"

"Oh, well, if you put it that way, yes," remarked Don in exasperatingly cheerful tones. "Mr. Spear, you invited me to come here and see how you 'trim' patients. I believe that's the way you phrased it. But if this is a sample, somebody else besides Morrill will be trimmed, or I miss my guess. As you suggested it, I'll referee this thing. I like a square fight. The three of you, seems to me, have a sweet, pretty job on your hands. Get together!"

The malignant glances they shot at him told Brush his turn would come presently, if they succeeded with Morrill. With the nonchalance of a professional, Don sat down on the edge of the bath-tub.

"Gentlemen, proceed!" Now was his opportunity. Very deftly he got his concealed kodak ready for action.

Morrill, like many dipsomaniacs in easy circumstances, devoted his leisure time to physical culture. He derived as much pleasure from witnessing exhibitions of the manly art, as he did in adding dividends to the whiskey-trust. These three huskies from the logging camps were no joke, and every faculty of his being was stimulated to effort. He used swift tactics, and brought into play every possible scientific move to offset the mass of their brute force.

He was afraid they might use the neck-strangle, so easy for two opponents to accomplish—the left arm around the neck with the right acting as a fulcrum, which leaves the victim completely at the mercy of his antagonist.

Swiftly he reflected. He was as clever with his left as with his right, but how was he to get rid of the

long-armed Spear, and yet ward off Fales and Goddard? Ah—the dip!

Suddenly he braced his right foot against the wall; and with a lightning duck and a forward lunge his head struck Spear in the pit of the stomach. The deputy dropped to the floor with a gasping groan.

But Morrill had been a second too slow. Fales, with the impetus of a leaping wild-cat, was on his back. His arms, around Morrill's neck, were giving not the neck-strangle but the head-twist. An eighth of an inch beyond the quadrant of rotation meant an almost imperceptible click—a broken neck and instantaneous death. This is the trick that fools the doctors, who accept the statement of the nurses that the patient has died of "heart failure."

Morrill knew his danger. Instantly he threw all his strength into the muscles of neck and shoulders in the opposite direction from Fales', keeping his eyes, meantime, on Goddard.

As the latter was about to fall upon him with full strength, Morrill shot his right foot upward and hooked him under the jaw. The impact was terrific. Goddard fell on his side, and for the present nothing interested him.

On that instant Morrill slipped his right thumb into Fales' eye-socket, and gouged. A murderous punch did the rest. Fales with a choked howl, clutching at his eyes, followed Goddard to the floor, and stayed there.

It was a busy day for Nemesis, so far as Allandale was concerned. Meanwhile other events were forward.

It seems that Morrill had a sister in Winchester who understood the true nature of her brother's disease. She was grief-stricken when she discovered he

had been admitted, on an emergency, to the Asylum. The circumstances of his commitment had been unusual. She had telephoned the hospital several times; then, feeling unsatisfied with the vague reports of the assistant physician, had driven out to Allandale, herself.

Miss Morrill, who was about thirty, rather handsome and of distinguished bearing, was not at all backward in expressing herself as to the looseness of a system that commits a man to the asylum simply for going on a drunk. Moreover, she said, drunk or sober, her unfortunate brother was never a menace to friends or society. She insisted that he be brought into her presence at once, or that she be taken to him. This Dr. Wilson politely, but peremptorily, declined to do, as it was too late for visitors, and no exceptions were made in any case. He would call up the ward, however, he said, and receive the report of the attendant in charge.

While this interview was taking place in Dr. Wilson's office, sanguinary history was being made in the bathroom.

Dr. Wilson lifted the receiver and called the single night-nurse. That young man was at the moment doing picket duty outside the bloody "Temple of the Bath." After repeated calls, the superintendent dropped the receiver; and, with chagrin at his failure to get an answer in the presence of so distinguished a visitor, intensifying his rage against the night-nurse, excused himself and went directly to the violent ward.

There was no sign of an attendant, and when he called, "Nurse! Nurse!" no response.

Thoroughly aroused now, he entered the long corridor leading to the bathroom, at the door of which he found the nurse listening. Shaking with indigna-

tion, he roared:

"See here, you! Why aren't you in your ward?"

Covered with confusion, in a faltering voice the nurse replied that he was waiting for the patient in the bath.

"And is *this* the way you perform your duties? Open that door!"

The sight that met Dr. Wilson's eyes almost unnerved him, trained as he was to hold himself under control. He stared at Brush, then at Morrill and finally at the three men on the blood-dabbled floor, who were beginning to show some animation.

"What is the meaning of all this?" With difficulty he spoke in measured tones.

Brush took it upon himself to answer. He said briefly that he had been invited to take his first lesson in bathing and "trimming" a patient.

"I assure you, Doctor," he added, "it was very instructing and interesting. Look at the tub! Look at Morrill's face! They call that the Swedish movement, I'm told. Look at those gentlemen on the floor! They've evidently been overcome by the air in this bathroom!"

Dr. Wilson turned on him, livid.

"What do you mean by such flippancy, sir? Explain yourself!"

"I mean just this!" Don cried, his voice biting like a file. "I don't believe you are cognizant of the tragedies that take place in this damned slaughter-house. But you have been criminally negligent. You have been deaf, dumb and blind to the needs of the poor creatures consigned to your professional care. You've smothered every attempt at investigation. Yet you know that the frequent complaints of cruelty that you receive from patients are not the result of deluded

minds, as you would have the public believe. For years they've complained of the abominable food, and you've replied that it was the same as that served at your private table. You know you lied, when you said it!

"You know, too, that you haven't one-third enough nurses, and you hire the cheapest and the most ignorant and heartless members of society. You censor letters you have no legal or moral right to touch, and throw most of them into the waste-basket. You know that you compel your convalescents to work hard. You know there are scores here as sane as either of us! You know as well as I do that if Allandale were honestly investigated there would be uncovered a series of horrors that would make the name of Massachusetts a hissing and a by-word! And I know, and you soon *will* know, if you don't now, that your administration dates its end from tomorrow!"

Dr. Wilson had stood as if in a trance. Now he sprang forward.

"Who are you that dare talk to me—*me*——?" He gasped with rage, unable to continue.

"Who am I?" sneered Don. "Oh, nobody; only a writer generally in the employ of the *Boston Star*—but in this instance directly employed by Dr. George Clark!"

Dr. Wilson leaned faintly up against the wall. Before him loomed shame and personal ruin, if this night's work were once disclosed to the press. He considered.

"How long have you been here?" he stammered, at last.

"Nearly seven weeks."

"Who is this patient?"

"His name is Morrill, and he is confined in the violent ward."

Dr. Wilson started, for he suddenly remembered

Miss Morrill, waiting in the office.

"What is his condition?"

"Perfectly sane. He never belonged here."

"My God!" The ejaculation was made under his breath, but the superintendent's face went gray. With a supreme effort he gathered himself together.

"Mr. Morrill——" His suave manner, as he addressed himself directly to the fighter, who had stood silent and cynical, his arms folded across his breast—"Mr. Brush will give you your clothes. You are welcome to remain in one of the rooms of my own apartments, if you choose."

"Doctor," said Morrill, speaking very politely, "my experience in this Hell hardly warrants me in accepting your hospitality or in extending my thanks for the magnificent professional interest centered in me since my recent arrival here. Mr. Brush will bring my clothes, but I'll return to the violent ward, in which I've found all the comforts of home, to dress myself." His laugh was quite polite, but a trifle unpleasant.

The three men on the floor were beginning to get to their feet. They had much the same wondering stare in their faces, as the poor hysteric who returns to consciousness with a pitiful: "Where am I?"

Don accompanied Dr. Wilson as far as the office and tendered his resignation, to take effect at once.

Wilson, knowing that explanations at the moment would be futile, decided to allow Morrill to leave Allandale with his sister, making an earnest endeavor to impress upon her that, if he, the superintendent, had been at the hospital the night before, Morrill would not have been admitted. His watch and a small sum of money were turned over, and with freezing courtesy Morrill and his sister turned their backs upon Allandale, an "Institution" supposed to cure persons of

diseased minds, and which instead, manufactured idiots, maniacs and corpses.

As soon as Dr. Wilson could trust himself to talk coherently and act with discretion, he ordered that Spear, Goddard and Fales be put in a room with three beds, and that under no pretense was any one to be admitted to visit them.

He went back to the ward that had so recently harbored the scientific gentleman boxer. The few sane patients appeared in some strange way to understand what had happened. They were discussing in whispers the prolonged absence of Morrill. Hicks was up still, and had refused to retire till he felt sleepy. This was against the rules, but he had no fear of the night-attendant.

Brush had come into the ward hurriedly, after leaving the office, and had in a few words apprised Hicks of the events of the evening. Harold was fast asleep, looking so wan and weary that Don hadn't the heart to wake him, even had he been able to do so without arousing suspicion. He left a message of hope for Hicks to deliver in the morning.

When Dr. Wilson again entered the ward, the nurse who had been surprised outside the bathroom door approached him.

"What do you know of the unfortunate occurrence in the bathroom?" Dr. Wilson's tone was keen.

"Nothing, sir. I was ordered by Mr. Spear to take Morrill there. He went without protest, but he was gone so long that I went to find out what was the matter. I was listening, as you came along."

"Is it customary to take patients to the bath at eight o'clock in the evening?"

"Yes, sir, if we are very busy during the day."

"How often?"

"Oh, once or twice a week."

"By whose orders?"

"Mr. Spear's."

Looking at Hicks, Dr. Wilson asked: "Why is this man up and dressed?"

"Oh, I've ordered him to bed repeatedly, but he refuses to go. The last time he told me to 'go to Hell.'"

Dr. Wilson lost self-control, and burst out angrily:

"I wish to God that you, and the whole bunch, *were* in Hell!" he cried violently. He was leaving, when the muttered remark of Laidlaw, the night attendant, to the same effect, caught his ear.

"What's that?" he roared. "You wished *me* and all the doctors in Hell?"

"If there is such a place outside of Allandale, I hope you're all on the way there!" retorted Laidlaw furiously. "I came here to learn nursing. Do I learn it? Your system of nursing is an insult to the profession. I've been here only a few months, but I've seen more than one hurried to his grave by those bloody hands in the bathroom. They're not nurses; they're murderers! If you'd personally examine into a few of the cases whose death certificates have been signed 'heart failure' or 'alcoholism' you'd ha' found broken ribs and breast-bones, and pounded or stamped faces; and if you'd had an honest post-mortem you'd ha' found fatal internal injuries. The nurses explain that by saying the patient fell on the edge of the bath-tub in a fit, or something. I'm done, Wilson. You can have my resignation in the morning."

With much the same feeling as if the walls of Allandale were tumbling in upon him, Dr. Wilson hurried to his office to plan a campaign for bringing order and coherence out of this night's confusion, and to save himself, and the institution, if he could.

CHAPTER XXIX

Freedom!

TWO days after the affair of the bathroom, things were slowly settling into their usual routine. The nervous apprehension in which Dr. Wilson had lived, had almost made him a fit subject for bed; but Allandale had been thrown into such utter demoralization that he had been absolutely forced to brace up, forget his own tremors and concentrate on the task of bringing order out of chaos.

In mysterious ways the news of the battle had filtered through every department; everybody showed signs of restlessness, and in some quarters the atmosphere seemed surcharged with a sentiment of mutiny. The absence of Spear from his place, and of Goddard and Fales, not only crippled an organization short, at best, of attendants and nurses, but gave point to every rumor afloat of the sanguinary conflict.

Brush's resignation and departure had left the violent ward short-handed, and twenty-four hours later Barbara had resigned and left Allandale by the afternoon train, going to a friend's home in Newton. Dr. Wilson was inclined to think the two resignations closely connected; and with some difficulty he lowered his dignity sufficiently to make a few discreet inquiries. He thus learned, through asylum gossip, that Miss Avery and Mr. Brush were lovers. At least, they had

often been seen together in the evenings on Ilex walk or about the grounds.

Barbara, when asked by Dr. Wilson, declined to give any specific reason for resigning. She merely said that the position of nurse had grown obnoxious and arduous, and that a way had opened for a change of vocation. Very apprehensively Dr. Wilson watched her leave. He was instinctively more afraid of this calm, reticent woman, than of Don.

Whether Morrill or his sister would see fit to make any complaint against his administration he could not guess, and he sweated from every pore for four-and-twenty hours; but after this, his nerve calmed down. It was unlikely that Morrill would care to have his dipsomania tagged with publicity.

Laidlaw, the night attendant, who had revolted so unexpectedly, could do no particular mischief; for any complaint he might make could be attributed to the petty malice of a discharged attendant.

As for Brush and his employer—nothing but a fanatic, the man Clark—three-fourths of what Brush had said was rhodomontade and Dr. Clark was a damned crank whom nobody took seriously. And the *Boston Star*? The superintendent grinned nervously, but derisively—the counting-room would shut down on any publicity from *that* quarter! The heaviest advertiser in the *Star* was also a trustee on the Allandale board, and that same trustee had a political bee buzzing around his brow. So it was quite unlikely that he would want any search-light investigations which might reflect on his trusteeship just now. This blustering Brush had said his administration would end on the morrow. Well, it hadn't; and another day was come and gone. So far, so good.

Dr. Wilson breathed quite comfortably as he sat

down to dinner with his family in their luxurious private apartment and opened the evening paper with only a faint quivering of his nerves. The next moment his eyes bulged. It was not the *Star*, but the *Boston Blade*.

SHOCKING CONDITIONS AT ALLANDALE

Strong-Arms Beat Insane—Graft and Cruelty!

Administration of Superintendent Wilson Should Be Investigated! Reporter Plays Rôle of Attendant in Violent Ward for Seven Weeks and Bares Revolting Conditions—Sane Men Incarcerated!

Mechanically he read through the long article, in which was related every instance of cruelty that had occurred at Allandale during the past year. He read of things daily taking place which he knew now for the first time. He sickened at the revelation. In cold type how hideously loomed these monstrous things!

Ghastly and shaking, he pushed back his chair and went abruptly to his office. There he seemed suddenly gifted with a prophet's vision; for he saw distinctly that with the possible exception of the *Star*, not a counting-room of any newspaper in Boston would lay its veto on the editorial department, but irrespective of politics would print every cruel detail. It was his finish, beyond a doubt—the end of an administration begun auspiciously, to close ingloriously, leaving him a dishonored man for life.

The sun came in through the western window, resting its beneficent radiance on the bowed head of Dr. Wilson, Superintendent of Allandale. He knew al-

ready he was beaten, but he would go on fighting. He would not resign; let them oust him, if they could.

A special delivery letter reached Barbara at breakfast. "We are to be married tomorrow, come at once!"

Smiling at the sudden note of authority, but loving him more for it, and for his ardency, Barbara left Newton on the first Boston train. Don took her directly to Dr. George's home, where the doctor and his lovely, warm-hearted wife gave her the warmest of welcomes. Next day they were married. Don explained that there was much, very much, to be done and that a thousand cares lay on his mind. He couldn't bear the thought of living without her an hour longer, and now, since fortune had begun to smile on him, he proposed to let her do all the planning.

First, of course, Don had gone to Dr. George and laid the result of his investigation before him, with the photograph of the assault that he had been able to secure. The story was then given to the *Blade*, and the search-light of that powerful newspaper was instantly turned on Allandale. Not only this, but the managing editor of the *Blade*, after a brief talk, offered Don a place on that paper, with salary enough to warrant him in marrying. At Don's expressing grateful surprise, the manager grinned affably, "I've read your stuff some years. It's always been first-rate. Keep straight and you can stay as long as I do!"

Harold's release was now their instant concern, and the discovery of Hicks' kindred. Then with the legislative investigation of Allandale, there would be many busy days ahead.

So Barbara, frankly glad, had asked for no delay; and to her Don had relinquished the joys of house-

hunting and settling, urged by his anxiety over Harold, an anxiety Barbara felt with equal keenness. It was their dream that, upon his release, Harold should find them in their own abode, and know what a real home-coming meant.

Ten days later, Harold sat at their table, and in the joy of his reunion with Don, the sweet home-air, the calm, the peace, his youth almost came back to him. Perhaps when only the scars of memory remained, perhaps then, that look of inner radiance might yet return.

He glanced about at the quaint, long room with its French windows standing open on the veranda, the lilies of September flaming in the garden, still beautiful, even though their gorgeous petals were closing as the sun began to set.

Harold had taken no time to wonder over the marriage of his friend to this magnificent, whole-souled woman, and his prosperous accession to this old-fashioned little house in the suburbs. He was too utterly weary to conjecture about anything.

The days following Don's departure from Allandale he had borne patiently; and two weeks later, when summoned to the office of Dr. Wilson, he there faced Don, with Dr. George, whom he had first disbelieved when the physician had uttered his terrible denunciations of the iniquities of asylums; but, who, he knew now at such bitter cost, had spoken only the hideous truth. Dr. Wilson released Harold on the evidence presented, which was indisputable, that he had been illegally incarcerated through a conspiracy. Dr. Wilson was a broken man, though he was trying desperately to bluff through the investigation immediately pending.

Harold had the satisfaction of seeing Hicks lib-

erated the day before himself. A sister had appeared, the sister whom Hicks had so long and patiently been expecting and with whom Don at last had succeeded in getting in touch. Harold had become attached to Hicks, and through him had learned of Don's unvarying kindness, his discipline and the efforts he had made on his behalf. This had given him courage to wait.

Don, Harold and Dr. George had left Allandale by automobile, and on the drive into Boston the long story of events, from the moment they had been separated in front of the Art Studio to the moment he had caught sight of Harold in the window on that fading afternoon of early July, Don told at last. Only one thing did Don withhold—the story of what Dr. Phillips had been to Barbara, although he did tell that Barbara had at one time expected to marry the physician.

Dr. George had left the two, as soon as they had reached Boston. Tomorrow the three would take up the matter of getting after the conspirators. Until then (Dr. George spoke in his professional capacity) he counselled Harold to put out of his mind all thought of his wrongs. This night he must relax and lay his head down in such tranquil sleep as he might now command. "Brooding on one's wrongs, anyway, is apt to narrow the mind. Brooding on the wrongs of others, on the contrary, may widen it," said Dr. George.

"May?" asked Don, looking at the Doctor. "Your verb's in the wrong mood. It does!" Then Dr. George colored a little, and they both laughed.

And so the car drew up before the long, low, green-hung house that now was Don's and Barbara's home; and Harold saw waiting with outstretched hands a tall woman with a Madonna face—a face still faintly

shadowed by the suffering past; and on the instant he remembered he had seen her before, and where.

In her eyes were tears—tears of happiness. His eyes were wet, as well; and in that moment he knew that, after all, life was kind.

CHAPTER XXX

Aftermaths

THAT night for the first time in many weeks, Harold slept in a clean and restful bed, the darkness of September with its fragrant, autumn tang lying just outside his open window, so close he could put out his hand and seem to touch it. And yet, only last night he had been assailed by hellish noises; and oppression like a cloud had hung on him, while fetid stench had offended his acute, protesting senses.

At Allandale, tonight, it would be the same, and a thousand other nights.

Before he slept, he visualized every familiar hideous hour of the day, and saw himself again looking wistfully out of the barred windows at the green, arching avenues of Allandale—hideous paths of despair. But, thank God! at last he was out of that charnel-house, for the hand of a friend had clasped his groping fingers in the darkness. Fate had indeed been kind. He sat up in bed suddenly. Yes—Fate had been good to him—but what of those thousand others?

A long while he stared into the autumn night, then presently he laid him down again. He knew at last, now, all in one clarifying second, the meaning and the promise of his long anguish; and then he fell asleep, profoundly.

He awoke to hear deep and far-off bell-tones. They vibrated slowly. He listened. Solemnly, at long but equal intervals, they smote upon the ear.

At the breakfast-table, Don informed him that Judge Chambers was dead, and that the tale of his years had just been tolled by the bell.

His house was only half a dozen blocks from "Dreamwold," the fanciful name Barbara had given their little home.

"Chambers?" Harold's tone was vibrant. "He's the man who sent me there!"

"That will complicate matters, I'm afraid, Hal," commented Don in a tone of some dismay. "While Judge Chambers was probably as lax as most officials, yet I very much doubt if he would have winked at sending a sane man to Allandale. They must have fooled him in some way."

"Possibly," said Harold, "but what business has a judge to be fooled?"

"The court records in this instance are not of vital importance," answered Don, ignoring the indignant question. "It would have been difficult to recall the whole matter to his mind, and his viewpoint would have been uncertain. He might have been afraid—in view of the pending investigation—that his having committed a sane man to an asylum would injure him politically. So he might have taken the ground that you *were* insane at the time of your commitment; or he might have been indignant at the affront put on him in deceiving the court, and have had the case reopened, and the offenders punished; or he might have simply forgotten the whole thing,—passed it up into the limbo of a judicial mind. We shall never know. But tomorrow sees the machinery of the law set in motion against those scoundrels, damn them!"

"I fear it will be useless," said Harold, quietly.

"Hal, you haven't lost your nerve, have you? The fighting, obstinate attributes I loved in you?" Don's

tone was full of affectionate protest.

"Nerve?" Harold passed his hand over his forehead. "No," he shut his lips grimly, "it's just something I feel."

Once more his intuition had spoken truth. The three weeks that followed were exciting enough. The first week, Boston talked of nothing but the exposure of Allandale. The newspapers were crammed with it. Then most of them dropped the matter abruptly; and in ten days newer topics absorbed all but the *Blade*. The throb of fresher sensations swept Allandale away from public interest.

To be sure, the investigation of Allandale resulted in the ousting of Superintendent Wilson, and a few other drastic changes in personnel. Conditions were ameliorated in some respects. The papers spoke of the thorough "purging" of Allandale, and of "sweeping measures of reform." In four weeks the topic was dead as a stone.

Having done all that it could, and kept up the fight longer than any other newspaper in Boston, the *Blade* finally dropped the matter.

Harold, Don, Barbara and Hicks had all testified at the hearing. The photograph of the famous "Battle of the Bath" had adorned the front pages of the *Blade*. The notoriety to the four concerned was revolting; but Morrill's Athletic Club, delighted with his prowess, gave him a banquet (at which he had sense enough to keep sober), and toasted him as a likely "White Man's Hope."

Now occurred a curious phenomenon.

The story of Harold's invention, how and by whom it had been filched from him, was given to the world. Barbara and Dr. George looked for an overwhelming public sentiment that would eddy toward Harold in

compassionate waves—a sentiment so vast that the conspirators would quail before it.

But Don's newspaper wisdom made him skeptical, and that subtle intuition which is the gift of the gods to a dreamer, made Harold doubtful.

Had the story been printed simultaneously with the exposé of Allandale, popular sympathy would have been at white heat. But it was not given to the papers until the wave of psychological reaction had set in. Folks—good folks—whose emotions had been keyed up to high tension, suddenly began to comfort themselves with the age-old assurance: "Oh, the newspapers always make things out a great deal worse than they are. Inventors, like poets, are mostly crazy, anyway. This Fitzgerald is one of them; he probably belonged in Allandale. It's a delusion of his that his invention was stolen—how can one believe the testimony of an inmate of Allandale? The very fact he was there shows that *something* was wrong!"

Damnably subtle was the suggestion made by one of the papers that had been quickest to drop the asylum atrocities and toss to the ravenous public a fresh, raw "sensation." First it vaguely hinted that Fitzgerald's invention was a delusion; then it came out boldly and affirmed it. And on the following Sunday, Don, Harold and Barbara saw with grief and horror that it had "featured" a "Story of Harold" and his career in Dunkirk, Pennsylvania.

The story contained the testimony of old neighbors, who, overcome with delight at the prospect of getting into print, had hysterically said anything the paper wanted them to say. It gave out statements with just enough truth in them to make them more insidious than the most outrageous lie.

They testified, these neighbors of Harold, that the

Fitzgeralds had always been, well—"queer." They told of "crazy Kenwyn Fitzgerald" and his myriad unsuccessful inventions. Nobody denied the eccentricity of father and son; and at a hundred thousand breakfast tables, Bostonians read:

"Is this Harold Fitzgerald a mad genius, or an irresponsible lunatic with delusions, who has occasional rational periods and has been released from restriction during one of them?"

The public hates to be forced to think. It accepted the version of the newspaper, quite comfortably. In all probability Harold *was* an irresponsible dreamer with a fixed delusion that he had invented something and that it had been stolen from him.

"Poor fellow!" sighed Boston, and straightway forgot him.

But Harold? From him the foul stigma, that horrid blight of insanity would not (it seemed) lift itself; and none knew better than he that all the compassion and infinite pity of the human soul cannot keep out the shudder and dreadful curiosity with which the world looks on an insane person; looks even on a mere suspect, or one against whom this crime of crimes has been charged.

Dr. Phillips and his wife had flitted to Egypt immediately after the conditions in Allandale had become public and Harold's release been made known to the world. When Harold went to the apartment where Don and he had been so happily domiciled, he found it had changed hands. A new clerk answered his questions politely, but without personal interest. No letters had been received for Mr. Fitzgerald. "Oh—some months ago?" He would inquire and see.

After a time he announced briefly that all mail addressed to that name had been ordered sent to Dr. Sydney Phillips. Yes, the order was in Mr. Fitzgerald's hand. Harold asked to see the order, and presently looked upon his own signature.

Oh, but they had been clever. *How* clever he learned soon, when he faced Jackberry himself. That gentleman never flinched, but got up and offered his hand cordially. When Harold, paling at such effrontery, stood contemptuously silent, Jackberry grabbed his hand and then began shaking his head pityingly. In a flash Harold understood the rôle.

So that was it? He sat down weakly. God! Must he fight this hideous vague shadow—this cobweb horror—instead of something concrete and tangible that he could get hold of with his hands?

"I hoped, all along, a few months' rest would restore you, Mr. Fitzgerald," the Senator soothingly murmured, "but you seem to look on me as if I were an enemy. What's that? Why, my dear fellow, that little business transaction between us was perfectly regular——"

Never till his death would he forget the days that followed, and his soul's revolt. For though his intuition had told him his invention was forever gone, the actual fact was hard to bear. In those first days after his release from Allandale, his brain had still been apathetic and numb with suffering. He simply could not grasp the fact, even though he seemed to know it in advance. It was as if all human props had suddenly been withdrawn, and he was fighting alone, his back to the wall.

All that Jackberry and Winn did was to deny, without excitement, every charge that Harold and his lawyers made against them. They simply laughed, and

then shook their heads pityingly, as one does at the frenzies of one who is not "all there," as they significantly hinted.

Then Harold learned the utter uselessness of the battle. The conspirators had patented and added to the Neo-Geo a little addition he had kept back. He had no way of proving this as his invention. He discovered, too, that the vague, rambling paper he had signed before the probate judge had held a joker in it. He had signed away every right, interest and title to his own patent. The conspirators had been diabolically clever. They had taken no chances whatever. Thrusting him into Allandale had simply kept him out of the way and prevented him from making any unpleasantness before they had got well started on their march to millions.

At first, these men had paid for a private room and a few creature comforts for him. After a time, as vast prosperity had come to them, it had calloused them so that no spark of humanity had remained, and they had forgotten all about him. If they had thought of him at all, it had been to reflect that Allandale would simply finish up what nature had begun, and that he was a half-cracked enthusiast, at best. The testimony of his personal friend and physician, Dr. Phillips, and the unbiased statement of Dr. Martin Winn, would be sufficient to justify their action, if worse came to worst.

Subtle suggestion in the newspaper, inertia of the public mind—these worked their cumulative ill; and so long as life might last, Harold Fitzgerald would have to bear that stigma.

But, in that house when Sydney Phillips had first visited Harold's little workshop and cast covetous eyes upon that invention, forces had been set in motion—forces for good—to which the centuries would vibrate. That had been an epoch-making hour.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Greater Call

DON and Harold were sitting in the living-room; Barbara was busying herself elsewhere. A marked change had come over her since marriage. She grew girlish before one's very eyes. The change that had altered Don was equally marked. A certain dignity of carriage had been added to his energy, and the boyish darkness of his eyes now held a depth, a profundity of vital purpose in them, which made men sometimes turn to look at him.

And now—if only the shadows might lift from Harold! Don's heart ached with the wrong. Clearly there was nothing at all to be done about it; and most bitter thing of all to Don, the conspirators would go unpunished. In the apathetic eyes of Boston, the men whose names had been mentioned in the conspiracy had vindicated themselves by showing legal possession of the invention, and Harold was therefore an irresponsible, eccentric genius with delusions.

It was Harold himself who now developed a peculiar stubbornness.

"What's the use?" he said with a strange smile, to Don. "We can't do anything without money. It would take years of fighting and delay, and the cost of prosecution, of proving my case, would be enormous. I've talked with lawyers, and so have you. They've got the machine; they've been operating it for months, and possession is nine points of the law. They've got my

signature, signing away my invention; oh! they forgot nothing! How am I to *prove* that they drugged me, and that I didn't know what I was doing, when I signed those papers?

"Moreover, they've put on me this blight of insanity—it's just what the poor fools in Dunkirk did to father. And yet I know men today, rich through inventions of my father, that they defrauded him of——" He had spoken in bitterness, but now his voice relaxed. "Don, I'm going back for a while to my western home, where father died."

Don was drawing on his pipe just then. He smoked but rarely now, because he liked to keep clean lips for Barbara. The long windows stood open, and the shadows of the shorter-growing days were beginning to creep into the room.

"Well, if you feel you must go, Hal, I won't hold you back," Don said dejectedly, "but I can't bear the thought of your going back to that lonely house—not under the circumstances. Barbara and I want you to stay with us indefinitely."

Harold arose and paced the floor.

"You two and Dr. George are the only friends I've got in the world, now, and I don't need any others," he said impulsively and boyishly. He was looking like the old Harold again, just at that moment. Most of the time the boyishness had gone, and in its stead was a maturity that puzzled Don. A brooding man had succeeded the dreaming boy.

"Go I must," he repeated presently. "My work calls me, and my home is there."

He stopped pacing and looked out of the window, lost in a sudden abstraction. Don's voice brought him back.

"Phillips hustled off to Egypt in a hurry, didn't he?

There was *one* of that cobra nest, anyway, who didn't dare to face you!" he exclaimed.

Harold turned. "Yes, he wasn't quite ready to face me yet, after having rented my house to strangers, as if there were to be no resurrection for me. The agents never knew the difference, of course. I have only a life-interest in the house. Phillips had my power of attorney to act for me, and he evidently intended to appropriate my income. In fact, I've found out that I was paying for my own maintenance at Allandale, those first few months. Then he got greedy and stopped sending even my own money to keep me! How long things could have gone on that way before the fraud was discovered, I don't know. But it hadn't been, up to the time of the newspaper disclosure, and even then Phillips' private rascality wasn't suspected.

"By the time I got into communication with my agents, Phillips had been frightened, and I was wired that all moneys due me had been placed to my credit. Phillips knew it would be easy enough to land him in prison for an offense of that kind; but for me to prove that he and the others maliciously deprived me of my personal liberty is impossible. Anyhow, my money is intact, so I can't get hold of Phillips that way—and—well, I haven't enough money or time to waste on a mere matter of individual punishment."

Don had risen and was protesting vehemently as he paced the floor.

"What is time or money, Hal, when you consider what's at stake? That machine has already proved itself worth millions. Consider, for God's sake, man, consider! You'll not have to fight this thing alone—there'll be a score of men back of you and your invention, if you just say the word—— Why, Dr. George will arrange——"

Harold faced him, his head thrown back in the old, arrogant way.

"Invention? Machine?" cried he. "There are more where that came from, if I ever want them!" He tapped his forehead, smiling superbly. It was the supreme genius who spoke. Don fell silent.

"You say you haven't time, Hal?" asked he, presently. "Are you going to develop something else—have you some other invention already in mind?"

Harold sat down and slowly answered:

"No, not yet. Of course, you know, I need money to carry out my life-work—as I've planned it." He paused. "I haven't very much, and this last year has been a drain on my slender resources. It's enough, though, to keep me without worry. I have ideas for inventions in my head—yes; but it would take money and months of delay to work them out; and then the going over the same weary ground that has ended in this disaster. No, it will not be *that* way I shall turn my eyes!"

His tone had grown abstract, far-away, dreamy—his eyes wore the look of inner concentration.

"The faces are calling me, Don! Calling—calling——"

Don, who had been leaning against the window, started, laid his pipe on the mantel and abruptly faced Harold. Taking his friend's lapels firmly in his fingers, he looked deeply into his eyes.

"What I'm going to say will hurt, boy——" He drew his breath in hard. "Don't ever mention those faces"—he was now stammering awkwardly,—“to anyone but me. *I* know you—I understand. Do you see?"

"I see." Harold's tone was quiet. "We've got to take the world as it is and not as it ought to be; and

the world would decide I should never have been allowed to leave Allandale, if I see faces appealing to me, or hear voices calling out for help. I believe *that's* one of the *sure* delusions. I learned a few things at Allandale."

He was now smiling again. Don gulped in relief.

"Just so, Hal," he said. "You've got to walk circumspectly for the rest of your life, if you would throw off that terrible blight. But God!—the cruel injustice of it! It's worse than a taint of blood——"

"And how about those countless others?" Harold's tone had grown vibrant—"those who have not been freed—for whom no hand of a friend has been stretched out? It's their voices I hear, calling for me to free them. And I hear the voices of little slaving children and anguished helpless women——! It was for *them* I was toiling to get my invention on the market. I wanted money, money that I might start into motion the forces necessary to bring about their liberty and happiness. Yet out of my very hands my invention was snatched. And added to the chorus of their pitiful voices I now hear the moans and shrieks of the helpless ones in Allandale——" He lifted his head, as if listening. "I hear them calling from a hundred quarters. I must be at my work, Don—there is no time to lose! The faces, the thousand faces are calling me!"

Don stood hushed, awed, understanding at last. This was no dreamer; this was a seer, a prophet. There would be those who would call him a mystic, a fanatic, a lunatic. But Don, watching him there under the gleam of the electrolier, had an instant of prophetic vision, himself. He felt, he knew, that the "boy" was dreaming true. Harold's was to be the hand to let loose those forces that would some day strike the

shackles off helpless children, patient women and plodding, hopeless men; his the hand that would open the doors of charnel-houses where the quick lived with the dead.

Harold began to speak again in tenser tones.

"There are things, Don, I saw at Allandale which I have not told, even to you. I saw loathsome, unspeakable things openly practiced. I saw men and women helpless and sane as myself, compelled to behold such infamies. It was my human revolt at this insubordination, they called it, that landed me in the violent ward. It makes my soul shudder to recall—what I saw. Listen, Don—I know why I was made to suffer—it was that I might see the road my feet must travel. Before, I thought the way lay through my invention—that I must have millions at my back before I could do the things I dreamed.

"Millions! Yes, I must still have the millions——" He lifted his head, and his voice rang like a bugle. "But it isn't money, Don. It's *men!*"

Don thrilled from finger-tip to heel. Harold's face was aflame, and the words came leaping, now, as only an Irish orator can hurl them, who has been touched by the divine spark:

"Nothing on earth can withstand The People, Don, if—if they only have a leader! Don, *I* shall be their leader! This is my life-work!"

On his face shone the inner radiance of consecration. After a moment's brooding silence he said, softly:

"My work calls me, Don, though every lonely instinct in me craves to stay and rest here, with Barbara and you. Through what strange ways and devious paths my feet will travel in the years to come, God perhaps can tell. I only know that, wherever that

hard road may lead me, thither I must fare. And—wish me luck, Don, dear old fellow!”

Their hands met in a grip that hurt.

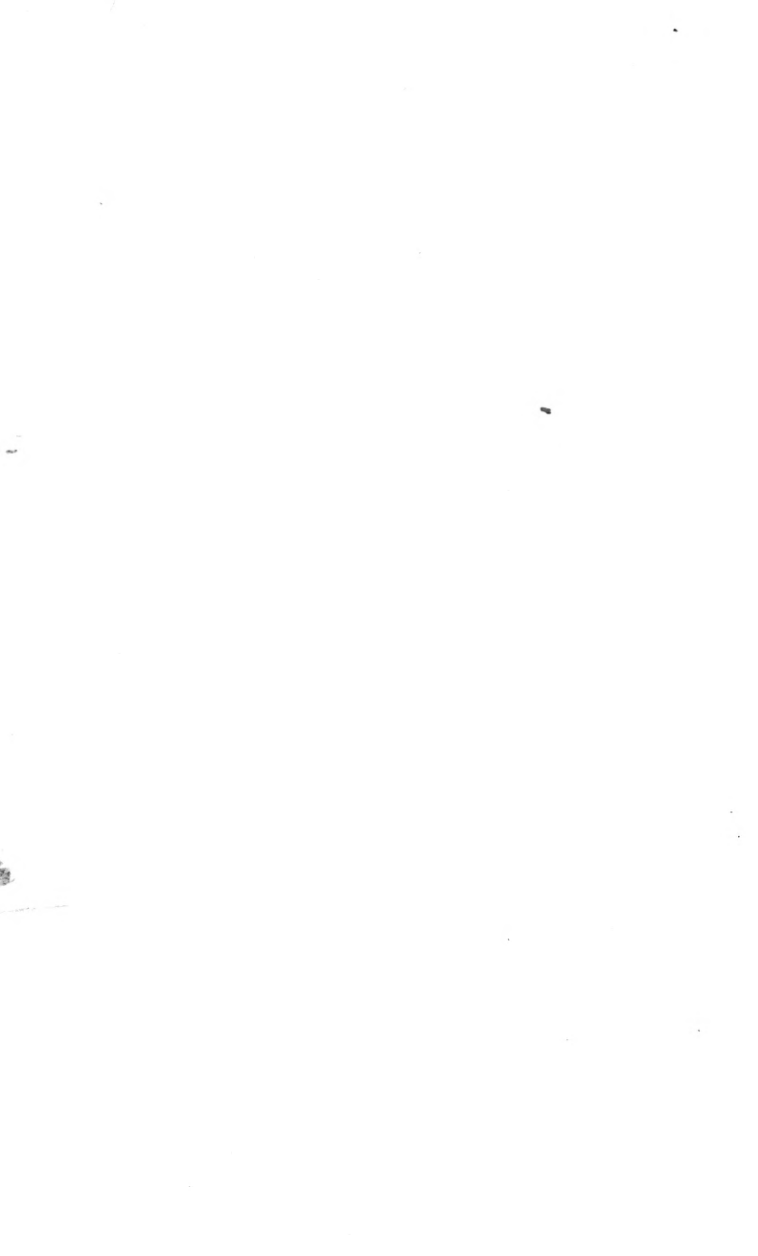
“Good luck to you, boy!” Don’s voice broke, at the end. Through the long window back of them stepped Barbara, from the lawn.

“I heard,” she said, tenderly. “I feel that you are right. The centuries will hear of you.”

“But it’s—oh—so eternally long to work!” said Don, in a very shaky voice, as he put a hand on the shoulder of the man he loved, and his arm around the woman of his heart.

The face of Harold still wore its look of consecration to a high work, afar.

“God waits!” he whispered.





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